"Withdraw My Name from the Trotsky Committee" *A letter by* M. A. Hallgren

NEW MASSES

FEBRUARY 9, 1937 FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY

Not All Rubber Stamps

SOME PROGRESSIVES IN CONGRESS

M. R. Bendiner

Who Is "The God of Floods"?

Edwin Rolfe

The Moscow Trials

An Editorial

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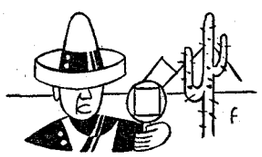
BETWEEN OURSELVES

THAT little candle, the NEW MASSES, throws its beams a long way, probably because of the naughtiness of this our world. The most recent flare-up of its luminosity has been in Mexico, where Editor Joseph Freeman has been sojourning for the past fortnight, attending the session of the Mexican congress of revolutionary artists and writers—and, not exactly incidentally, gathering material for a series of articles on the republic south of the Rio Grande. Some excerpts from Freeman's letters will show you what we mean by this little candle's beaming:

"You have no idea of the prestige the NEW MASSES has in this part of the world. . . . The *Nacional*, official organ of the Partido Nacional Revolucionario —hence of the Cárdenas government— interviewed me over six columns, and published it on Page One. And I have made my first speech in Spanish over a national hook-up from the station



owned by the P.N.R. . . . The authorities have arranged to send Joe Jones, a couple of others, and myself to La Laguna, the most important spot in Mexico today in point of land distribution. The government has distributed 25,000 hectares to peasants in a region so rich but so costly in irrigation that previous regimes—under the reactionary control of Calles—dared not touch it. There is a wealth of interesting material here, which I will be sending you shortly in the form of articles. . . ."

Our readers everywhere have wanted to know more about the recent death in Spain of Ralph Fox, English Communist writer and NEW MASSES contributor. Hugh Slater, another Englishman in Spain, tells the story in the International Press Correspondence:

"Ralph Fox was killed in the fighting near Lopera in Andalusia, while he was acting as Assistant Political Commissioner to a brigade of the International Legion.

"The fascists had advanced from the direction of Cordova, and the government had thrown special troops into action for a counter-attack. Lopera is the first village in the province of Jaen on the road to Cordova. The country is hilly, with gigantic, ragged mountains in the distance. The low hills are covered with olive groves, planted in endless, symmetrical rows. The most furious fighting was among the trees in the olive field covering what is now to be called "English Crest." One can imagine how intensely Ralph must have appreciated the beauty of this country.

"The counter-attack in which the English-speaking company played a prominent part was made from the bottom of a hill. The government troops took cover behind the olive trees from the hail of rifle fire from the enemy positions on the crest and also from the dozens of German Junker planes bombing and flying low, machine-gunning with explosive bullets. Ralph Fox was with the brigade commander on the road half way up the hill, when it became evident that there was an unforeseen possibility of our machine-gunners establishing invaluable positions covering the enemy's right flank. Fox set off running, bending low across some open ground to organize this maneuver. It was a supremely brave thing to do; the bombing and machine-gun fire were at their most intense, and it was almost certain death for anybody to leave cover. Fox knew this, but he considered it necessary to take the risk.

"Later the whole front changed, and this open ground became No-Man's Land in the center of the cross-fire. That night a soldier was instructed to crawl out and bring in the papers from the pockets of our dead. Among the things he collected were Ralph Fox's note-book and a letter addressed to him. The next day a group of comrades were organized to go out at night to identify the bodies, but unfortunately the whole brigade was moved to a new sector that afternoon, and this could not be done.

"The military commander with whom Ralph worked said that it was difficult for him to find words to describe Fox's amazing bravery. He said: 'He was an exceedingly brave man, and it was very largely due to his example that we were able to hold the enemy and save as many of our men as we did. I am not just paying a conventional tribute to a dead man when I say that he was a real hero.'"

What's What

THE American Pushkin Committee, headed by Robert Frost, is marking the one-hundredth anniversary of the Russian poet's death by a series of exhibits, memorial meetings, concerts, and other activities throughout the length and breadth of the land. A partial list of these has just been made public by Gen. Victor A. Yakhontoff, chairman of the group's executive committee, which is too long to publish. One item of interest is an exhibit of Pushkiniana at the New School in New York which will be on show till February 12. Dates and places of other affairs, many of which are being held during the coming fortnight, can be had from the committee, Room 1203, 56 West 45th St., New York.

A reader who is on relief writes in to say that the Riverside Branch Library, 190 Amsterdam Ave., New York, does not carry the NEW MASSES, but that the librarian in charge will carry it if the budget permits her recommendation to get favorable action. The opinion was expressed, however, that there was more likelihood of its being included on the magazine purchase list if a trial subscription were donated so that a real demand for it could be shown. *Verbum sap.*

Next week we will publish a group of poems by eight young poets who have not heretofore appeared in print. S. Funaroff has edited the selection.

Don't forget these dates: (1) NEW MASSES studio party to be held Saturday evening, February 6, in Studio 503, Steinway Hall, N. Y.—dancing, refreshments, entertainment, 50c; (2) the Spain all-star meeting at Mecca Temple, N. Y., Wednesday evening, February 10, with Bob Minor, Anna

Louise Strong, and Ralph Bates speaking, and Malcolm Cowley as chairman; (3) NEW MASSES theater party preview of John Howard Lawson's *Marching Song*, at the Nora Bayes Theater, N. Y., Monday, February 15—get your tickets through us.

Who's Who

EDWIN ROLFE has recently joined the staff of the NEW MASSES as labor editor. He was formerly on the staff of the *Daily Worker*.

M. R. Bendiner is political and economic editor of the NEW MASSES.

Irene Paull is a free-lance journalist in Duluth.

Walt Carmon was formerly managing editor of the NEW MASSES, and is now editing the reorganized *New Theatre* magazine which will appear presently under the title *New Theatre and Film*.

Rockwell Kent's drawing is from the Heritage Press edition of *Leaves of Grass*.

Chen I-wan has been staff artist and art critic on the Moscow *Daily News*, and is now in Shanghai. He is the son of Eugene Chen.

Harold Rosenberg has written fo *Partisan Review* and other periodicals

Flashbacks

"W P.A. must not go on!" is Washington's present phrasing for the perennial slogan against relief. As Roosevelt and Hopkins mumble this macabre battle-cry, the unemployed point up their countermoves by noting anniversaries of two of the events which summoned what relief there is into existence. Nationwide demonstrations, Feb. 4, 1932—National Unemployment Day—proved an effective sequel to the second Hunger March. Two years later, after work relief had been won to the extent of C.W.A., 900 delegates to the National Convention Against Unemployment (Feb. 3-5, 1934) forced introduction into Congress of the Workers' Bill for Unemployment and Social Insurance. . . . Twenty years ago, Feb. 9, 1917, Warren Billings was sentenced to life imprisonment for his alleged participation in bombing a Preparedness Day parade. The sentence pronounced on co-defendant Tom

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NEW MASSES
FEBRUARY 9, 1937

Marty

The "God of Floods"

Pinning the responsibility for mass suffering and death on the guilty party reveals no abstract deity, but persons in our midst

By Edwin Rolfe

THE waters have begun to recede in the Ohio valley, leaving a million men, women, and children adrift in mid-winter, washed out of homes, jobs, and possessions. As this is written, the crest of the Ohio Valley flood is surging downward into the Mississippi River, threatening the lives, health, and livelihoods of the population dwelling within fifty miles of either side of the swollen Father of Waters. Even in round figures, to which most of us have grown calloused, the toll of lives and the works of men's hands is shocking: one million without homes, six hundred dead of drowning and disease, and at least a half billion dollars in property destroyed. And the toll mounts daily.

Large sections of ten states, from Pennsylvania to Mississippi, have felt the dread shock of the flood. Thirty-three cities are completely or partly under water. Normal life and activity is at a standstill. Epidemics of pneumonia and scarlet fever, breaking out in Indiana, have spread to other states. Cases of small-pox and typhoid fever, twin handmaidens of flood and accompanying filth everywhere, have been reported in widely separated cities. Water supplies are low, and in many cases polluted. Broken gas mains in a number of cities have released poisonous fumes into the air; these fumes add to the danger of fire, which has already broken out in Louisville and a dozen other cities. Shattered oil and gasoline tanks have emptied their highly inflammable contents upon the surface of the swiftly-moving waters, creating a fire hazard which can destroy whole towns if the fluid comes in contact with any charged electric cable.

And all of this is merely a beginning. It is history repeating itself. Flood and fire and pestilence are not new to the United States. In *Life on the Mississippi,* published fifty-four years ago, Mark Twain wrote of the horror of floods. The only difference between the flood of January 1937 and other floods of the past is in its extent and in the degree of suffering left in its wake. Reaching a record high level of 80 feet in Cincinnati and ranging to 34.2 feet in Pittsburgh, the raging waters of the Ohio created a mark of destruction against which unborn chroniclers will measure floods of the future—unless something is done now to check such recurring catastrophes.

Simple round figures, whether of record levels or of destruction of homes and possessions and human lives, can never convey in harsh enough terms the horror and suffering of this most horrible and damaging of all floods in American history. New horrors will be featured in the daily press within the next week as the water drains slowly from the inundated cities and rushes toward fresh victims along the Mississippi. While the Mississippi River dwellers fight for their lives, a million men, women, and children will return to desolated, slime-covered hovels and attempt to pick up where they left off. Many will never succeed. Disease will wipe ou thousands. Unemployment and starvation will do the rest.

THIS TIME, however, no newspaper will dare label its editorial "Act of God," except in irony. Those who speak of God in connection with this flood will be either the simple, or the cunning liars. For this flood, like so many before it, could have been prevented, if not entirely in some cities, at least partially. This was an act of men—men of wealth and greed and power—men callous to human suffering.

How else explain the fact that for thirty years—ever since the first large-scale engin-

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eering plan was drawn up in 1908—nothing even beginning to resemble adequate and effective flood control has been seriously put into operation?

As far back as 1908, a flood commission composed of Pittsburgh citizens and engineers undertook an investigation which revealed that the problem of flood control was a nation-wide, or at least state-wide, project. In a 500-page survey of its findings, published in 1909, it stressed the need for the construction of large reservoirs at the headwaters of large rivers, on tributary streams which flow into and feed such mighty rivers as the Ohio, the Mississippi, and (in Pittsburgh's case) the Allegheny and Monongahela. Such dams and reservoirs, the survey pointed out, would halt the flood waters at their source.

But the business-controlled city government at Pittsburgh knew well how to kill this plan. It granted the commission $3,000 for the work! Afterward, threatened by another flood, an additional $124,000 was raised, of which only $57,000 came from taxes on heavy industries in this section, and $67,000 from voluntary contributions by the people. This sum, too, was inadequate; after much red tape, the project was handed over to the U. S. Army Engineers, which body announced that "reservoirs could be built which might absorb any conceivable flood." But the cost, the army maintained, would not be worth it. The Army estimated this cost—for the Pennsylvania district alone—at $96,000,000.

"What was the reason that the steel and coal magnates did not press for flood control, although the U. S. Weather Bureau reports eighty-six floods in the past eighty-six years?" This question was asked by Dorothy Israel, writing in *Social Work Today*, after the 1936 Pittsburgh flood. "Why," she continued, "did the U. S. Army Engineers call these yearly losses, and the threat of a major disaster, insignificant as compared with the cost of prevention?"

The answer is simple: "Except for the 1907 and the 1936 floods, these yearly losses are suffered chiefly by the 'low rent dwellers' [the working people in Pittsburgh industry who inhabit the low-level regions] who are annually routed by the spring waters."

There is another reason for the criminal negligence of Pennsylvania as regards adequate, effective flood control. After the 1936 flood, which was predicted almost thirty years ago, the entire press went on a flood-control bender. Day after day, the headlines called for flood control, but the editorial columns were still brazen enough to pin the disaster on God. Writing in NEW MASSES (March 31, 1936), Bruce Minton identified Pennsylvania's mythical "God of Floods." His name is Andrew Mellon.

But the Pittsburgh and Harrisburg papers steered clear of any mention of Mellon's sacred name. Minton gave the reasons a year ago: "Mellon owns a controlling interest in the U. S. Electric Power Corp. And this holding company controls the Class A stock of the Standard Power & Light, another holding company; and in turn, the Standard Power & Light controls the Standard Gas & Electric Co., a holding company which owns the capital stock of the Duquesne Light Co., the Equitable Gas Co. of Pittsburgh, and the Pittsburgh Railway Co. Mellon has enormous interests in the Westinghouse Electric companies. From these companies—virtually a

SEEING AMERICA FIRST

V—Flood Refugees

Herb Kruckman

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monopoly of the utilities in the Pittsburgh area—Mr. Mellon makes huge profits." Here comes the catch: "Flood control would allow for the sale by the government of electrical power at a cheaper rate than is now demanded for such power in Pittsburgh and vicinity, not only because it would be produced from water power rather than from coal, as at present, but also because such power would be a by-product of the dams and reservoirs that could be built. If it came to a showdown, flood control actually would mean that Mr. Mellon's monopoly of the electrical power industry would be a thing of the past."

Andrew Mellon has not only clamped down the lid on public and newspaper discussion of his responsibility for these recurring floods; he has actually intimidated the thousands of workers employed in the industries which he controls—mining, power, light—into accepting his bogy story of widespread unemployment in the event that use of water power, by-product of the construction of dams, becomes widespread. "Pennsylvania has been showered with utility propaganda," said the *People's Press* a year ago. "The miners are told fantastic stories of coal-displacement, if and when hydro developments become general." Actually, an insignificant minority of miners are employed by the steam-power industry. The great bulk of industry is steadily growing to depend more and more upon hydro-electric power. This propaganda is typical of the publicity which is aimed at government power, at real flood relief.

WHAT IS TRUE of Pennsylvania is equally true of the other nine states now suffering under the worst flood in history. In Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas, West Virginia, and Mississippi, the same plans have been proposed at frequent intervals, in the stress of oncoming or receding floods. And the same interests—the power trusts and large industrial companies—have sabotaged all efforts at real flood control, all plans and suggested appropriations to relieve the perennial loss in lives, homes, and suffering of the working populations. At the doors of the people who control large industry and power lies the responsibility for these floods with their attendant disease and death. They, the counterparts of Andrew Mellon in a dozen states, are the real criminals.

Responsibility for floods cannot, however, be placed on the shoulders of Mellon and his like alone, although the big power and industrial boys rightly deserve ranking as "Flood Control Public Enemies No. 1." The federal government and, in recent years, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, share a large measure of responsibility for the current loss of homes and lives. At the last Senate session, a one-man filibuster by Senator Millard Tydings (D., Md.) prevented an omnibus flood-control bill from coming to a vote after it had been passed in the House of Representatives on August 22, 1935. Heavy flood damage caused the bill to be revived last spring, and at the end of March the Senate Commerce Committee was preparing to report an omnibus measure authorizing a ten-year nation-wide flood-control program to cost about $1,000,000,000. But President Roosevelt blocked passage of this bill by suggesting that it be limited to authorizing only emergency works made necessary by recent floods. As finally passed by the Senate, the original sum of $1,000,000,000, which was grossly inadequate when compared with the enormous demands of a really effective flood-control project, had been pared down to $384,000,000; and expenditures for the first year were limited to $50,000,000—in other words, $46,000,000 less than had been proposed by Army engineers as the cost of flood protection for the state of Pennsylvania alone.

Carl Hacker, reporting to the Western Pennsylvania Conference on Flood Relief—an organization established after the disaster of spring 1936—had this to say about government responsibility for floods and flood losses:

> It is a well-known fact that the utilities of Pennsylvania are the ones responsible for lack of flood control. The government, which passed no legislation and pushed no projects on flood control, is jointly responsible. We therefore say that the government must make complete restoration and give full compensation to those who lost in this flood. Not only that, but it must insure us against recurrence of such floods by immediate appropriations.
>
> It is entirely possible for the government to do this. Our government has in the past four years given some $8,000,000,000 to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. The R.F.C. loans this money to the big corporations so that they may recover from the present crisis. Much of this money will never come back to the government. They are loans, but in due time these loans will be canceled.

Eight billions to the big corporations. But even one billion was too much for President Roosevelt and the elected representatives of the people to spend for flood control!

The damage caused by floods does not end when the waters recede; it does not end even when and if victims are compensated for lost and damaged homes—which rarely occurs. Each new flood increases the danger of a recurrence; and each flood carries away with it—to be irrevocably lost—the precious topsoil, upon the careful retention of which depends America's food supply and the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of farmers. Only a fraction of the water-borne soil comes to rest in the flooded areas—in cities and towns, where it is worthless, and on farm lands, where it may still be useful to the farmer. By far the greater part is carried down the rivers and washed away to sea. If it remains in the river beds, it raises the level of the next flood in direct proportion to the amount of soil deposited, and thereby increases the suffering future floods will cause.

Jacob Burck

DESPITE the ballyhoo of the past few years regarding soil and forest conservation, pitifully little has been done. The great droughts and dust storms of the Midwest during the past few years have done little more than create even greater talk-storms in Washington. When three crack cameramen, Paul Strand, Leo T. Hurwitz, and Ralph Steiner, went west more than a year ago to make "The Plough That Broke the Plains," they returned with a heart-breaking film record of widespread devastation, erosion of what had once been the land's best soil, destruction and desertion of dozens of towns in the dust storm's path. No editing of the film in Washington could dispel its grim picture of destruction; and the tagged-on ending, purporting to show what the government was doing to overcome dust storms and soil erosion, fooled very few. The staggering fact remained that American earth is becoming weak, anæmic, unproductive, and that the longer real soil-conservation is delayed, the more irretrievable becomes America's loss.

In the eastern regions swept by the floods, the problem of soil conservation is not yet as acute as in the west. But it is pressing enough to evoke these words from the noted engineer, Morris L. Cooke: "This country is face to face with the major crisis of its history. . . . We can repair or rebuild bridges, highways, railroads, and houses damaged by the flood waters. We cannot restore what is carried away by our overflowing rivers—the fertility of our soil, which is the basis of our very existence. . . . As a people, we must realize that the flood loss and soil loss are part of the same tragic story—the record of our ignorant and profligate stewardship of the land."

To the adjectives "ignorant and profligate," Mr. Cooke might accurately have added "criminal." In the light of what has been discussed, the wasting of our natural resources, and with it the destruction of our people, can be blamed directly on big business and, through its octopus political machine, on the federal government. As matters now stand, and unless immediate steps are taken, flood and soil-impoverishment present a pretty hopeless picture. Floods wash away soil; as a result, the remaining soil cannot retain normal rain waters. Flood control becomes more difficult each year that real work on it is delayed.

All of which points to the necessity of (a) immediate construction work on a national scale, of the type proposed (but not acted upon) by the army engineers who examined the problem in Pennsylvania; (b) immediate measures for soil conservation, and reforestation—whatever will enable soil to retain

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the excessive moisture which impoverished earth cannot hold; (c) construction of dams and levees in the headwaters—the little mountain streams which feed the large rivers; and (d) the organization of the people of this country—not only flood-victims, but workers and farmers everywhere—to fight with every means in their power against the sabotage of these projects by big business, by the utilities corporations and their representatives in Washington and in the state capitals throughout the nation.

The organization of the people is the most important point of all. Without a popular and widespread movement, all measures which have been pussyfooted in the past stand in danger of being dropped the moment that the emergency created by the present flood is over. Eighty-seven times in eighty-seven years the floods have come and gone; and beyond the immediate (and always insufficient) relief measures for the stricken populations, virtually nothing has been done.

Last year, at the time of the Pennsylvania floods, the people got together in an organized manner for the first time. With the backing of dozens of workers' and fraternal organizations, they formed the Western Pennsylvania Conference for Flood Relief. Leaders of unions joined the committee, editors of labor papers were active, borough councilmen and burgesses of dozens of inundated towns were drawn openly into the fight for flood relief. The aid of the Red Cross, these people decided, was not enough. They went even further, listing specific cases in the flood-stricken areas where the Red Cross had not only been guilty of graft and corrupt relief practices (that's an old story), but had refused aid to the homeless and the sick. In a speech delivered at the conference, Mr. Mark Vinski, borough councilman of Etna, Pa., declared: "The words I heard about the Red Cross aren't strong enough to please me. The Red Cross came to our borough to embarrass the people, not to help them. The only things people saved out of this flood were their bedding and the clothes they had on their backs. There wasn't a single thing left. These people were completely burned out. And the Red Cross put them through all kinds of red tape and then offered them $25 each, without further investigation!

"This body can bring pressure to bear where it will count. If there is anything to debunk, it is the Red Cross. If you can prohibit them from chiseling in on a disaster like this so that they can get money and keep themselves in salaries, I think you will be doing the people a great service.

"The Red Cross is always praying for a disaster," Mr. Vinski concluded, "so that they can come in and ask people for money. When they do come into a district that needs help, they are there to see that you don't get it. If they hadn't come into Etna, we would have gotten much more for our people from other organizations—maybe even from the government. When the Red Cross came, everybody else pulled out. The Red Cross is always there to see that the people don't get anything."

Hans

"I've decided to declare myself God. Of course there'll be a plebiscite."

The conference adopted a four-point program which is a model for such people's relief organizations as are now in process of formation in a dozen cities and towns. The program is a model for similar programs this year. It proposed:

1. Full compensation (instead of loans) by federal, state, county, and city government for all flood losses suffered by workers, farmers, and small businessmen.
2. Entire program of reconstruction to be carried through at prevailing union wages and under union conditions.
3. Direct relief to all flood sufferers as long as needed.
4. Federal government to appropriate immediately all funds required for full flood-control program—all work at union wages and conditions.

In order to achieve these ends, the conference further urged an immediate program of action, consisting of seven points:

1. Organize local conferences.
2. Mass meetings in every locality.
3. Organize associations of flood sufferers.
4. Increase endorsements from organized bodies.
5. Send a mass delegation to special session of State Legislature for enforcement of the (four-point) program.
6. Send committee to Washington to interview President Roosevelt and House and Senate Committees.
7. Gather data on distress cases growing out of flood: rent and price gouging, etc.

One additional demand will be stressed by all people's flood-relief organizations this year—a demand which gains in importance and need as the flood-waters sweep southward: no discrimination against Negroes. Stories of the tragedy have already revealed that the Negro people, most exploited and poorest of all in the flood area, have been among the most tragic victims of the waters and of spreading epidemic diseases. In Wheeling, W. Va., Negroes are segregated from other flood victims; the same practice prevails in Louisville and other southern cities. People's committees in all sections this year should put an end to such segregation—by Red Cross and all other agencies—against a people which suffers more deeply than any other in this calamity.

Work was begun on all of these flood-relief points last year, but the organization was not strong enough to buck Mellon and Washington effectively. Congressman Matthew A. Dunn, a member of the Flood Control Conference, introduced a bill "to provide full compensation to workers, farmers, and businessmen for losses suffered in the flood occurring in western Pennsylvania in March 1936." But the appropriation called for in the bill, $25,000,000, was too much for the gentlemen who had suffered no qualms of conscience in appropriating $909,651,391 for direct military and naval expenditures at the very same session—the largest armaments appropriation in American history.

Slowly the workers dug out of the muck and filth and slime of the flood, with little aid outside of that given by their own neighbors. Many had not yet recovered when the present flood swept down upon them.

The daily press will carry for many weeks more the story of receding waters, new property damage discovered, new bodies found afloat on rivers, or corpses buried in silt. "Shoot to kill" orders have been and will continue to be issued in cities in the flooded area "to prevent looting." Looting will mean, in these cases, the attempt of washed-out, homeless men to secure food or shelter, which neither government agencies nor the Red Cross will adequately provide. But there will be no "shoot to kill" orders directed against the real vandals of flood times—the food and rent gougers, the big employers taking advantage of crisis conditions to offer jobs at mere subsistence or starvation wages. When the entire story is told, the deaths will probably have doubled their present total, and the sufferers from disease and homelessness will have become in many instances a permanent and gruesome memorial to the criminal neglect and sabotage of big business and the criminal ignorance of our lawmakers.

MEANWHILE, it would be well for the stricken people, in fighting for flood relief and flood control, to call to the attention of their representatives in Congress, Engineer Cooke's ominous prediction:

"As matters now stand, and with continuance of the manner in which the soil is now being squandered, this country of ours has less than a hundred years of virile national existence. If that represents a reasonably accurate statement, it is vastly more significant that we have probably less than twenty years in which to build up the technique, to recruit the fighting personnel, and, most difficult of all, to change the attitude of people who hold that ownership of land carries with it the right to mistreat and even to destroy their land, regardless of the effect on the state."

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Dim Dawn Over the Capitol

The individuals in the progressive bloc vary in experience and insight, but respond to pressure

By M. R. Bendiner

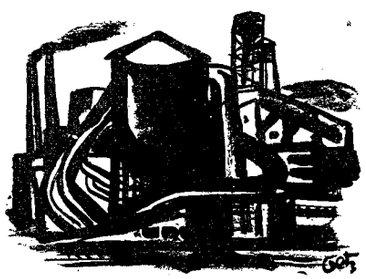
BY now it has become apparent to some liberals, to many Socialists, and to all Communists that fascism can be prevented, and the road cleared for social change, only by the united effort of democratic forces. It does not follow from this conviction, however, that any section of a potential people's front need be considered beyond the range of political criticism. In this connection, I believe that we of the Left have been too prone to see all farmer-laborites, and potential farmer-laborites, as the salt of the earth, without examining too closely their fundamental political beliefs or their capacities for putting those beliefs into practice.

Specifically, there is a danger, I think, in placing too full a trust in the present progressive bloc in Congress as a nucleus of the much-desired people's front. The uniting of these hitherto independent liberals in what is known as a permanent progressive conference is unquestionably a hopeful and significant step, but after interviewing the leading members of the bloc, I cannot escape the conviction that they are still far from constituting such a nucleus. It is impossible to talk with these men and not be impressed with the divergence of their views on basic matters of policy, with the vagueness and political confusion of some of them, and with the astounding and admitted indifference—the almost complete lack of understanding, in fact—of most of them concerning social trends abroad. At the same time, it is impossible to overlook their genuine sincerity, and their sensitivity to expressions of public opinion.

Roughly, the progressive conference in the House of Representatives consists of seven Progressives from Wisconsin: Amlie, Sauthoff, Withrow, Boileau, Schneider, Hull, and Gehrmann, and five Farmer-Laborites from Minnesota: Tiegan, Bernard, Johnson, Kvale, and Buckler. Joined with these in a more or less loose attachment are Dunn, a Democrat and Farmer-Laborite of Pennsylvania; Havenner, a Democrat and Progressive of California, and Maverick, a Texas Democrat. In sympathy with the group and likely to work with it are the Democratic members of the Washington Commonwealth Federation: Magnuson, Leavy, and Coffee. And finally, there are such independent liberals as Scott and Voorhis of California, Phillips and Fitzgerald of Connecticut, and perhaps Hamilton of Virginia, all Democrats. Before considering their varying reactions to specific measures of the present session, it might be well to glance for a moment at the personalities and origins of these Congressional left-wingers.

Most prominent of the newcomers, by virtue of his lone opposition to the President's emergency "neutrality" bill, which he demonstrates works wholly to the advantage of the Spanish fascists, is John Toussaint Bernard. Ore miner and fire-fighter, Bernard has the bearing and the spontaneous, colloquial, wholly unaffected speech of a worker rather than of a politician. Born in Corsica forty-three years ago, he retains the trace of a foreign accent (though he came to Minnesota at the age of fourteen), and perhaps more than a trace of Gallic mannerisms. Probably the only member of the bloc who is genuinely class-conscious, he impresses one as close kin to those who have come to power in the popular fronts of France and Spain. After ten years in the ore mines, Bernard served as buck private and corporal in France, and learned to detest war with a great hate. Returning home, he joined the Eveleth, Minn., fire department, and became active in Farmer-Labor activities, rising to the post of chairman of the county Farmer-Labor Association. Bernard is not much impressed with the New Deal, and takes the prospect of a new national party with great seriousness. "Unless this administration proves by its actions and not by its words that it is going to alleviate the sub-subsistence wages of the masses," says this dark, fiery-eyed worker-Congressman, "the nation that voted it in will rebel, and a third party will sweep the country."

Perhaps the best informed of Bernard's Minnesota colleagues is Henry G. Tiegan, one-time state secretary of the Socialist Party in North Dakota, journalist by profession, and still a member of the Newspaper Guild. Cordial and informal, Tiegan talks freely, and is convinced of the need for a third party. Well-intentioned but admittedly pretty much at sea on a score of questions is husky, genial Dewey Johnson, eagerly looking for guidance, and preparing himself for an active career of oratory on the floor. Aside from Paul Kvale, moderate liberal in Congress since 1929, whom I failed to see, the Minnesota Farmer-Labor delegation is rounded out by Richard Buckler, weather-beaten old farmer from the Red River valley. Buckler proclaims himself the conservative of the group, and he is filled with antiquated populist notions. More than most in the bloc, he is strongly inflationist, but with few exceptions, all his colleagues cast sheeps' eyes in that direction. What is more, Buckler agrees whole-heartedly with the spurious money program of Father Coughlin, and grows wrathful when he thinks of the bankers in New York. Nevertheless, he rejects Coughlin as a fascist and feels pretty sure that the sleek-voiced priest has shot his bolt. He approves of barring Communists from Farmer-Labor meetings, however, because they want to overthrow the government "b' force an' violence." Nevertheless, he is not congenitally pacifistic. He can understand militancy where people are allowed to starve, and he hopes, even if it does "get a bit commanistic now," that the Spanish government will "whup th' insurgents."



Arthur Getz

OLDER in point of service than the Farmer-Laborites, and as a group more conservative, are the Progressives of Wisconsin. Outstanding among these are Thomas R. Amlie and Gerald Boileau, floor leader of the entire progressive conference. In many respects Amlie is the keenest mind in the bloc; certainly he is the most concerned with long-range social change. He is radical in the sense that he is willing to come to grips with fundamental social issues, but he is far from Marxian in his approach. He is anti-Communist, and at the drop of a hat will cite instances of anti-liberal attacks by Communists in days gone by. Arguing that the Communist Party was responsible for the defeat of Marcantonio, he warns against repeating that experience with Bernard. Despite Marcantonio's own disavowal of such an explanation for his defeat, Amlie makes it plain that he has, and will in the future, repudiate Communist support. Strong-featured, serious, and obviously sincere, Amlie nevertheless has a sharp eye cocked on the home vote, with due consideration for its most backward elements. He would not permit himself, he told me, to speak at rallies for the Spanish government, and even refused to speak against Hearst on the ground that his was the best paper Chicago had to offer. Amlie finds his constituents growing more conservative, a fact which he attributes to the rising price of milk, and he insists that even in the worst times, they are far from class-conscious. Communists make a mistake, he believes, in placing

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so much emphasis on class consciousness, and he inclines to the view that capitalism can hold on for years with the aid of inflation. He is not for inflation, and he admits it is a last desperate move, but he insists with a somewhat dubious air that it is "powerful medicine."

NOMINAL leader of the entire bloc is Gerald Boileau, neat, handsome, and as solid in appearance as any conservative young business man in the land. Boileau envisions a major third party only if Roosevelt should move to the right of his present position. Then, he believes, it would flourish as a genuine "liberal" party. No idea of socialization enters Boileau's thoughts. He is not even sold on the idea of coöperatives, and in foreign policy he is an ardent isolationist.

One and all, the progressives with whom I spoke showed a lively responsiveness to what they considered the wishes of their constituents. Few of them, apparently, regarded themselves as leaders, in the sense that they would act in what they thought to be the best interests of their people; rather, they leaned to the doctrine that they were in Washington purely as representatives of their respective districts, bound to carry out the wishes of those who had elected them, regardless of their own opinions. This attitude obviously has advantages and disadvantages. It calls for persistence on the part of the mass of people in making known their demands. That is all to the good. But it likewise presupposes the ability of the mass of people to formulate specific policy designed to attain their ends.

Consider the question of war and peace, for example. With complete unanimity, these progressives read aright the desire of their constituents for peace. But because they had been elected on a platform calling for "Security at home; neutrality abroad," they felt, with one exception, that they could not fail to endorse the President's spurious and discriminating "neutrality" measure against the government of Spain. Only Bernard appeared to realize that the measure, by giving aid to the rebels, was a direct encouragement to fascists, i.e., to those who are driving headlong toward a war that will in all probability suck the United States into its midst.

It is interesting to note here the politically mature approach which Bernard makes toward the Spanish conflict, as compared with that of his colleagues. "How is it that this confusion exists here?" he asks. "I think that this is the reason: In the past, the great criminal debauches we know as wars have generally been waged between those nations and their innocent peoples which have been caught in the clutches of rival imperialists. . . . However, we know that there have also been other kinds of wars, such as our own Revolutionary War, as well as wars against colonial aggressors, wherein entire peoples have attempted to protect themselves against enslavement." Viewing the Spanish situation in this light, Bernard goes on to show how a threat to democracy in one country is a threat to democracy and peace throughout the world, and he concludes: "The resolution to embargo shipments to Spain is a partisan, pro-fascist, anti-democratic measure. It is against the interests of peace, and I oppose it."

In contrast to this view, we have the rigid "hands-off" policy of Boileau, who regrets that "special treatment" in the case of Spain had to be resorted to, but believes that the law should have covered civil wars in the first place. Yes, he admits, the law would probably work a hardship on the Spanish government, but neutrality always hits one side harder than another. That is not our business. No matter what happens to democracy in Europe, we must enforce mandatory neutrality against all belligerents. Distinguish between an aggressor and a nation attacked? Allow the League of Nations, let us say, to determine the aggressor? Sheer madness, says Mr. Boileau. No collective security for him.

Amlie's approach is different, but his conclusion the same. As he sees it, there are three choices in such situations as the Spanish uprising: to intervene on the side of democracy, to intervene on the side of Reaction; to maintain the strictest kind of neutrality. Everything, he reasons, depends on the administration in office. Unless it is extremely liberal, he believes, more liberal than the Roosevelt government, if it finds it easy to intervene, it will do so on the side of Reaction. This is especially true, says Mr. Amlie, since it is the fascist powers who are the most likely customers in time of war, the imperialist democracies being in a more self-sustaining position. Hence, a strict neutrality is really an aid to democracy. Q.E.D. Underlying this complex and round-about reasoning is a defeatist attitude that is far too unhealthy for a determined fight on fascism.

None of the others had any well-considered attitude toward the problem, though Tiegan and Johnson were both receptive to ideas for preventing American munitions shipments from reaching the insurgents by way of those two "neutrals," Germany and Italy.

WITH RESPECT to a constitutional amendment to pave the way for genuine social legislation, there was an even greater diversity of opinion. Of the nine men I interviewed, only Amlie really favored an amendment. He had introduced in the last session, and plans to reintroduce, an amendment more far-reaching in scope than even the Marcantonio Workers' Rights Amendment. Not only would it give Congress the specific right to regulate hours and conditions of labor in any employment; to "regulate production, industry, trade, and commerce"; and "to provide for the economic and social welfare of the people of the United States"; but it would give that body the right "to make direct levies on capital." Matthew Dunn, of Pennsylvania, who ran as a Democrat and a Farmer-Laborite (at first he ran also on the Union Party and Royal Oak tickets of Father Coughlin, and withdrew only when that worthy cleric launched his assault on Roosevelt) favored a bill permitting Congress to over-ride the Court by a two-thirds vote.

Boileau thinks an amendment might be in order eventually, but not now. Should the Court throw out the Wagner Labor Relations Act or the Social Security Act, he concedes, the demand for an amendment would be great enough to warrant a fight. But in the meantime, he is for relying on a change in the Court's attitude. Johnson doesn't believe there is a chance of an amendment's getting through. He holds, in common with many others, that the Court has no constitutional right to in-

Serrano

"Suffering, hell! They're just a couple of extroverts."

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validate acts of Congress, and would have Congress make that clear, perhaps by a clause tacked on to specific legislation barring the Court from invalidating it. Bernard and Maverick regard an amendment as unnnecessary. Congress has the power to do what it wants now, they hold; it is merely a question of exerting that power. "The Supreme Court question," says Maverick, "is all based on public opinion." Amlie agrees with this, but while Maverick appears to think the time has come to defy the Court, just as Jackson once defied it by ignoring its decision, the Wisconsin representative believes there is still too great a reverence for that institution, that such changes in public opinion come slowly. An amendment, he feels, would be more respectable in the public eye than any other course. Tiegan thinks the way out would be to clip the Court's wings by amending not the Constitution but the judiciary act, a congressional statute governing the federal court system. The Court, he insists, "is not really empowered to nullify acts of Congress." However, he would support an amendment "if necessary." Frank Havenner, a California Progressive who plans to work more or less with the bloc, is for curbing the Court "by the most practical method," but he is dead set against anything that appears to be tampering with the Constitution.

Probably what Havenner had in mind was legislation such as the O'Mahoney bill to regulate hours and wages in industry by requiring licenses of all corporations doing an interstate business. On this score, too, there is something less than agreement. Amlie would support it, with some misgivings, but he thinks there is little doubt the Court would throw it out. Johnson and Bernard have not given it much attention, but are favorably disposed to the idea. Maverick and Boileau oppose it unconditionally as "superficial," "complicated," and "un-American." Dunn, a kindly sort, inclined to be vaguely humanitarian, is "for every damn piece of legislation for the working man." All of them favored the thirty-hour week, Amlie for the reason that by encouraging machine improvements, it would increase technological unemployment and thus speed up the process of social change.

On farm problems, only Buckler and Amlie would speak at any length. Neither of them thinks much of the Bankhead bill to establish a comparative handful of tenants on farms of their own, under long-term obligation to the government. Amlie is convinced of the eventual success of the Rust brothers' cotton machine, and when it is perfected, he says, there will be no justification for putting men on forty-acre farms. When that time comes, and Mr. Amlie thinks it is not far off, those people who now eke out a precarious existence as tenants on other men's property could be rounded up and put to work on huge collective farms, operated completely on a coöperative basis. Obviously such enterprises would have to get under way with government help, which would certainly call for a showdown with the junkers of the South.

Syd

"Give me four years, and a new and greater German nation will arise from National Socialism." —ADOLF HITLER, 1933.

Nothing more eloquently exemplifies the wide disparity in viewpoint within the bloc than a comparison of Amlie's vision of American farm collectives and the agricultural program advanced by Representative Buckler. Crop reduction, straight unadulterated scarcity, is the Buckler prescription. Of course, workers would have to pay higher prices for food, he admits, but to balance that he would support minimum-wage legislation and relieve unemployment by shortening hours. That lower production, less national wealth, must mean a lower standard of living, Buckler fails to see. In essence, his program is animated by the same distorted reasoning that makes some Nazis think they can restore prosperity if they return to hand production and throw their machines on the junk pile.

There is, as I have already pointed out, a high degree of responsiveness in the bloc to public sentiment. The more strongly and clearly that sentiment is made known, the more united and determined is the action of these Congressional progressives. On the question of the deficiency relief appropriation, to take a shining example, there is complete unanimity. Not one of the men I interviewed failed to declare himself 100 percent in favor of the Workers' Alliance demand for an appropriation of $1,040,000,000, as against the President's proposal of $790,000,000. And they fought for it and voted for it on the floor, though very much in the minority.

NOTHING is further from the truth than the impression that Congressmen pay scant attention to the hundreds of letters that pour into their offices. On the contrary, they read them avidly, and several keep them on file according to subject, to consult when the respective questions they deal with come up for discussion. In many instances, a clear, convincing argument expounded in a letter to a Congressman, or an urgent message of appeal, may spell the difference between an affirmative and a negative vote. Where such messages are numerous, they are certain to have a pronounced effect. This is true to some extent even of run-of-the-mill politicians. It is true to an astonishing degree with these sincere representatives of the people, free from the shackles of the great party machines.

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THE NEW CONGRESS: "WHAT, NO CROSSROADS?"

Maurice Becker

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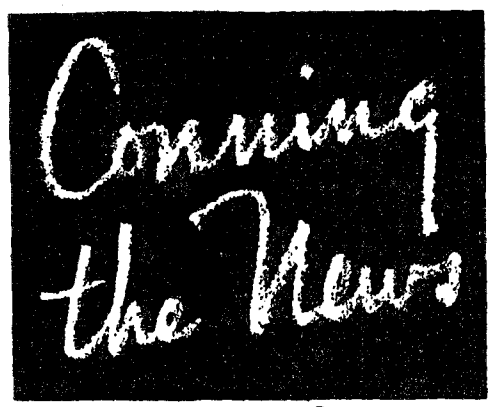

Covering the events of the week ending February 1, 1937

WITH one million people homeless, another six hundred dead, and $500,000,000 lost in property, the Ohio Valley states were furiously at work during the week trying to keep life going in the devastated area. But along the Mississippi River, into which the flood waters of the swollen Ohio were pouring, little hope was held out to populations within the path of the waters, despite frantic efforts by residents and army engineers to strengthen inadequate levees and to divert the oncoming deluge. Most seriously threatened as this issue went to press was Cairo, Ill., where the Ohio River flows into the Mississippi. With the river rising at the rate of an inch and a half an hour, workers feared that the sixty-foot levee, raised an additional three feet with emergency wood-and-sandbag bulwarks, would either crumble before the waters or be of insufficient height to prevent the dreaded overflow.

As the Mississippi Valley dwellers awaited the predicted crest of the flood, the receding waters of the Ohio left large sections of eleven states in the clutches of hunger, epidemic, homelessness, and fire. Still worse, it left desolated populations at the mercy of food and rent profiteers, and an inadequate emergency relief set-up. Segregation of Negroes was widespread in Louisville and other cities (see story page 3). To meet the emergency conditions and to apply pressure for flood-relief and flood-control legislation, citizens' committees were formed in Bellaire, O., Pittsburgh, and elsewhere. Despite the prompt technical aid supplied stricken areas by government agencies and army engineers, discrimination and continued want in the region made these committees indispensable in the fight for real aid.

Congress was quick to talk of funds for relief, but unfortunately they were funds intended for the unemployed. Asked point-blank whether additional appropriations would be asked to care for flood sufferers, Representative Buchanan (D., Tex.), chairman of the Appropriations Committee, replied: "This $790,000,000 carried in this bill" (referring to the administration-sponsored appropriation which included $655,000,000 for unemployment relief), "is subject to be allotted by the President, and he told the Speaker and myself that if it became necessary he would allot every cent of it to alleviate the [flood] situation."

EVEN without possible diversion for other purposes, the deficiency relief bill passed by the House fell far short of the demands of the United States Conference of Mayors, to say nothing of the Workers' Alliance, which asked for $1,040,000,000. "Is it not a fact that this $790,000,000 . . . will not take care of the people for the rest of the fiscal year and that many of them will have to be dropped?" asked Representative Lanzetta (D., N. Y.). "When spring and summer come," answered Buchanan, "employment will increase and you can drop some of them. . . . It does contemplate that by July 1 we will have 600,000 reduction." The progressive bloc, with the addition of some thirty-seven independent liberals, put up a stubborn fight for the Workers' Alliance proposal, but they had no chance against the administration steamroller. An even harder battle was expected in the Senate with the introduction of a bill to raise the amount to $1,200,000,000.

Aside from relief, there was little of importance in the Congressional week. Most sensational, perhaps, was the speech of Rep. Dickstein (D., N. Y.) charging that there are now "from 10,000 to 20,000 Germans who are drilling in this country in German uniform with a German outfit, preparing to be in readiness for any emergency that might come up in any future war between Germany and this or any other country." Declaring that "threats and compulsion" were used in drafting these German-Americans, Dickstein assailed Nazi Ambassador Luther as one who "is not here as an ambassador of good will, but is here just to do a certain duty to his government which is diametrically opposed to our form of government, and is interfering with our peaceful rights as a sovereign nation." Likewise sensational was the request of Senator Guffey (D., Pa.) for an investigation of charges "impugning the motives and character" of certain justices of the Supreme Court, made in the book *Nine Old Men,* by Robert S. Allen and Drew Pearson. The book, according to Guffey, "leaves the reader, however resentful, with an uneasy feeling that there may be plenty of fire beneath so much smoke." Typical of the book's accusations are charges that Justice Butler, a railroad lawyer before he attained eminence, used his Supreme Court position to assure high rates and low taxes for railroads and public utilities.

FROM the White House came numerous rumors of a "dramatic move" to replace the late N.R.A. Two major proposals held the spotlight. One was a possible congressional statute to establish maximum hours, minimum wages, and working conditions for all corporations and individuals engaged in interstate commerce. To assure the broadest interpretation and thus get around the Supreme Court, the act itself would contain a definition of "interstate commerce." The second proposal said to be under serious consideration was of a more ingenious nature, and would rest on the unquestionably constitutional power of the federal government to levy taxes. Under this plan Congress would work out a scale of hours, wages, and rates of production. An excise tax would then be levied on businesses exceeding the limits fixed in the federal schedule. The tax would not be intended as a punishment, but simply as a means of raising revenue for relief and reëmployment, regarded as the direct results of low pay, long hours, and speed-up. It would be in direct proportion to the amount of money paid to workers below the minimum, the number of hours in excess of the maximum, and the increase in man-hour production over the government-fixed ratio.

There was good reason to suppose that the impetus for such suggestions came directly from the General Motors battlefields in Michigan and Indiana. If there was any doubt that the President saw the necessity of placating his labor followers as a result of what the press presented as his "rebuke" to Lewis during the preceding week, it was dispelled by a much more unmistakable rebuke directed to General Motors President Alfred P. Sloan. Referring to Sloan's refusal to attend a proposed Washington conference with Secretary of Labor Perkins and union representatives, the President told reporters: "I regarded it as a very unfortunate decision on his part."

NATIONAL interest in the General Motors strike, as it entered its second month, was again focused on Flint, where company officials sought a court injunction to evict the strikers from the two major occupied plants. Before any decision was announced, company and Flint city police, aided by out-of-town strikebreakers, attacked strikers in Chevrolet Plant No. 9 with guns and tear gas. Of more than a score injured, two workers were not expected to live. While company forces were attacking Plant 9, Plant 4 was strongly reoccupied by strikers, who thus crippled the entire Chevrolet engine-manufacturing division.

Alfred P. Sloan had ordered the court proceedings pushed after turning down Secretary of Labor Perkins's invitation to a joint conference of company and union representatives, an action that brought down on Sloan's head not only Roosevelt's carefully worded criticism, but also a far more outspoken rebuke from Secretary Perkins (see p. 21). In Detroit, Governor Frank Murphy intimated to a "workers' delegation" stooging for the company that the auto bosses were responsible for "agents provocateurs at work on an adroit plan to embarrass me and compel the use of force."

Meanwhile, labor throughout the nation was anxiously debating Secretary Perkins's proposal that the Department of Labor be empowered by Congress to subpœna witnesses and documents "from both sides" for use in investigation of labor disputes. Although the proposal came after Sloan's rebuff to her, and was, ostensibly, for the purpose of bringing recalcitrant company officials into conference, labor and progressive forces saw a dangerous joker in it. Such a proposal, it was charged,

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"could very easily be the beginning of government supervision of trade unions."

Unlike Secretary Perkins, the Senate subcommittee investigating labor espionage and violations of civil liberties is fully equipped with the power of subpœna, and it used that power during the week to good advantage. Turning from the National Metal Trades Association, which it had revealed as an organization designed to break strikes for its member corporations, the committee, under the chairmanship of Senator LaFollette, fixed its attention on the Corporations Auxiliary Co., wholesale dealer in labor spies. Officials of the company testified that their two "best customers" were the Chrysler Motors Corp. and General Motors. The subcommittee, determined to sift the strike-breaking Flint Alliance, had subpœnas served on its leader George E. Boysen, on the Flint chief of police, and on other officials in the General Motors strike area. A resolution calling for a further appropriation of $50,000 for the subcommittee was introduced in the Senate, where it was believed it would buck strong opposition.

JUST as the center of automobile strike interest shifted from Detroit to Washington two weeks ago, the seamen momentarily eased up their concentrated offensive on shipowners and on ousted union officials, and carried the center of their interest and energy to the nation's capital. Headed by their leaders, Joseph Curran and Jack Lawrence, and several attorneys, including Vito Marcantonio, the seamen charged the shipowners with refusing to participate in any collective-bargaining conferences. Clashes between the union and company representatives continued before the National Labor Relations Board for most of the week, with the seamen emerging on the winning end. Through their victory, rank-and-file seamen in Atlantic and Gulf ports will be able to participate in impartial elections of officers in I.S.U. district unions. Meanwhile, the West Coast ship workers in San Francisco and elsewhere were looking forward to a vote pointing to the end of their three-month conflict. Barring shipowners' duplicity, the vote was expected to settle the strike to the advantage of the seamen.

San Francisco was also the scene of a new act in the long and dauntless fight of Tom Mooney to win freedom after more than twenty years in jail on a framed-up charge. Following the action of Referee A. E. Shaw of California's Supreme Court in whitewashing the frame-up, the court announced, through Shaw, that the imprisoned labor leader had not proven his charges of perjury by prosecution witnesses in the Preparedness Parade bombing of 1916. Anna Damon, International Labor Defense's acting national secretary, described Shaw as "a creature of the California interests which framed Mooney."

SO tense has the international scene become before important Hitler addresses in the past, that even the clearly ominous pronouncements made by the German dictator on the fourth anniversary of Nazi rule were

Lester Polakov

Trotsky—"Finished as a force."

received with relief because something less than a declaration of war was announced. But war was brought appreciably closer by Hitler's speech, with its veiled warning that Germany intends to fight for her former colonies, its unilateral repudiation of the last remains of the Versailles treaty, its ban of the Nobel Peace Prize to any German as a result of the von Ossietzky award, and its renewed pledge that the Nazis intend to keep "bolshevism" out of Spain. The colonial pronouncement, aimed at Great Britain and France, was softened by statements that there would be no more "surprises" in the future and that "there are no humanly conceivable points of dispute" between Germany and France.

The Hitler speech was answered almost immediately by French Foreign Minister Yvon Delbos, who took the opportunity of stating at a war memorial that the Nazis could not expect French diplomatic coöperation as long as their aggressive plans against the Soviet Union remained intact. Delbos also pointed out that Hitler had broken a treaty every time he promised to stop treaty-breaking. "By boasting of previous denunciations and announcing a new one," Delbos declared, "the chancellor does not affirm confidence in the value of signatures." But the most effective of all the answers to Hitler was given by the announcement of a broad united front of German Socialist, Communist, and liberal exiles against Nazi rule. Among the signers were Lion Feuchtwanger, Heinrich Mann, Rudolf Breitscheid, and Egon Erwin Kisch.

OF the seventeen members of the Trotsky terrorist center brought before the bar of Soviet justice last week, thirteen, including Gregory Piatakov and J. P. Serebriakov, were condemned to be shot, and four others, including Karl Radek and Gregory Sokolnikov, were condemned to ten-year jail sentences. All the defendants pleaded guilty, but prison sentences were meted out to the four because they were not directly implicated in terrorism or sabotage resulting in the deaths of Soviet workers. In a powerful summation, Prosecutor A. Y. Vishinsky recalled that Trotsky had written in his *Opposition Bulletin* of April 1930, that in the Soviet Union "[economic] retreat is nevertheless inevitable. It is necessary to bring it about at the earliest possible moment." Piatakov testified that Trotsky's theory that socialism could not be built in one country had led him to the conclusion that the restoration of capitalism was inevitable and that the Trotskyist policy had to be based on this assumption.

When the sentences were announced, more than a million workers demonstrated in Moscow against the terrorists, and Walter Duranty cabled to the New York *Times* that "the trial did 'stand up' and should go far to justify Sokolnikov's statement that Mr. Trotsky is now revealed before the workers of the Union of Soviet Socalist Republics and the rest of the world as an ally of fascism and a preparer of war and, therefore, definitely finished as a force of international importance." Substantially the same view was voiced by the famous Danish novelist, Martin Anderson Nexo: "The greatest disgrace for western European democracy is the fact that it defends this gang of criminals, whose leader, Trotsky, should be considered as enemy Number One of the whole of humanity and democracy."

JAPAN'S extremist army clique showed its preponderant power during the week when it successfully blocked General Kazushige Ugaki's attempts to form a cabinet. Ugaki is in no sense a liberal, but he did not go as far to the right as the military-fascists desired. The prime mover in the anti-Ugaki drive was the former war minister, General Juichi Terauchi, who issued a conciliatory statement renouncing fascist aims after the damage to parliamentary government had been done. "I believe that Japan is now standing at the crossroads of fascism or parliamentary government," said Ugaki after his defeat. Following his failure, a cabinet was formed by General Sanjuro Hayashi, who has been dubbed the "Japanese Hindenburg" because of the way he took office.

On the Madrid front the weather continued to work to the disadvantage of the rebels. Mist and rain prevented bombing and shelling of the city proper, while government forces scored small but strategic advances, endangering the whole rebel position in University City. Evacuation of civilians from the capital continued at a faster pace, with fewer hindrances, and defense forces reached a stage of preparedness where an offensive against the fascists seemed an early possibility.

The week found the attack against Malaga still in the preparatory stages, with two wings pushing toward the city from both north and south approaches. Malaga loyalists were reported rushing defense operations with their foe still twenty-five miles from the city. While reports from that quarter remained indefinite, it seemed clear that the northern wing of the rebel army had encountered effective resistance, but that the southern wing was still advancing. Loyalist victories were reported on the northern Aragon front, where for several weeks little activity was in evidence.

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A Talk with Pearl Buck

The author of "The Good Earth" states her opinions on certain politico-social questions

By Walt Carmon

WHY have books on China been so numerous and so successful? Because there is a general awareness that China is the testing point and a present and future battle-ground of capitalist imperialism. The great value of Pearl Buck's books, which have established her as a figure of international importance, is that she has dealt with the life of the masses rather than with old scholars in bamboo retreats; and with Chinese life in its own terms and from a viewpoint free from open or veiled assumptions of superiority.

For this she was superbly equipped with a unique experience which she has revealed in her last two books. The strains and personal unhappiness in her missionary family led her first to question, then to think out the realities of the life she found herself in and to come to courageous conclusions about the imperialist nature of all contacts of the West with the East, even in the matter of its "spiritual mission." To careful readers of Miss Buck's writings, the opinions expressed in my interview with her will not come as a surprise.

Naturally, one of the chief themes of our interview was her attitude toward communism and fascism.

"If I had to make a choice right now for either fascism or communism, I would choose communism. Fascism is only capitalism in a new dress. And much in capitalism is wrong." Miss Buck believes in the principles of communism, but is not convinced she must make the choice between fascism and communism today, in America.

Much of our conversation was about China. Out of the window on the nineteenth floor, one could see a good section of familiar New York studded with skyscrapers. This seemed a long way from the scene of *The Good Earth,* the field where for fifty years Miss Buck's father, the "spiritual imperialist," preached Christianity as told in her latest book, *Fighting Angel.*

It was even hard to believe that trim, American-looking Pearl Buck had come to America only two years ago after spending all the previous years of her life in China.

"I am strongly against imperialism," she said. "I can't approve of Japan's invasion of China. The Nanking government can hardly have the welfare of the Chinese people in mind. The leaders are really western people, with western minds trained in western universities. Red China? I really don't know. My family and I have lived for years near the borders of Soviet China, but I have not seen enough to say. I do know this: I hate war. I've lived most of my life in the midst of war and I'm against it. I hope for a more gradual change in China. Communism in China? I really don't know. The only Chinese Communists I met were among the intellectuals, the tea-drinking crowd. I wasn't much impressed. Yet any philosophy which can move so many people must have better followers."

PEARL BUCK'S views on the world we live in are expressed clearly. They are the opinions of an honest-thinking, very friendly, and very firm person. They are born of life and study. Speaking to her, you are aware of a cultured person. Her views on China, America, the Soviet Union, fascism, communism and art—whether you agree with them or not—are clearly thought out. I remembered the picture of her father in *Fighting Angel,* a surprisingly objective, honest one. Is the Christian Church, I wanted to know, and all "its well over a hundred different types of the Protestant Christian religion alone" of any use to the Chinese people?

"None at all," she replied quickly. To make herself clear, she added: "I do not believe in any religion. I do not believe in mysticism." Nor did she think that it was unusual for her to hold such views, although she was the child of a missionary in China.

"Chinese literature? The most virile force in Chinese literature comes from the Left." Pearl Buck spoke of the brutal treatment of the Chinese Left writers at the hands of the Nanking government.

It was natural to move to the question of the Soviet Union.

"You can say," she said firmly, "that my attitude is one of intense curiosity. I am open-minded on the question. I admire the foreign policies of the Soviets, their peace efforts. I think their attitude on the question of national minorities is admirable."

This came as no surprise to me. I recalled her repeated sympathetic articles and statements on the Negro in America. She was

Down with the imperialists! Chen I-wan

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glad there was no anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, on the subject of the Soviet Union, Pearl Buck had her reservations. "I am such a passionate believer in democracy and personal liberty," she said, "that I regret the suppression of even the minority groups, like the White Russians now in exile." One thing especially she is uncertain about: "I have serious doubts about individual expression in the Soviet Union, particularly among the writers and artists." She is worried about possible regimentation. I explained that Soviet writers expressed themselves freely, from problems of the civil war to love among ducks, that they spoke for the great majority of the population. I pointed to the statement of Molotov, which appeared in the press only that day, that even writers from the former ruling classes, like Alexei Tolstoy, former Count, were now not only Bolshevik writers, but even leaders in the Union of Soviet Writers. Pearl Buck admires Tolstoy's work, and that of Sholokhov, whose *Quiet Flows the Don* and *Seeds of Tomorrow* she had read recently.

"I read all of the Soviet literature I can get in translation," she said. "I am tremendously interested because I want to see what the great changes from a capitalist to a Soviet world have made in literature." She was aware that the nineteen years since the Revolution was a brief period in which this literature could develop. She read the speeches and proceedings of the last Soviet Writers' Congress with great interest. She was pleased that three of her books have been translated into Russian and have been well received by Soviet readers and the press. She came near going to the Soviet Union this spring, to see for herself.

PEARL BUCK is aware of the danger to peace involved in the present moves against the Soviets by Germany and Japan.

"If war does not intervene, I am going to visit the Soviet Union within the next year or two."

Intensely interested in the problem of American literature, Pearl Buck quickly spoke out on a favorite subject.

"I am aware that a writer has not complete freedom of expression in our country. He is restricted by profit motives and other reasons. That is very bad. It is difficult to be a conscientious artist," she said. She sees a great obstacle in the popular magazines.

Pearl Buck thinks Dreiser is our "greatest realist"; Dos Passos, a splendid writer. "Sinclair Lewis has written four good books, and the rest is ordinary journalism."

While the press carries stories of the breaking up of the government projects for writers, artists, and theatrical workers, Pearl Buck saw great virtues in them.

"The writers and theater particularly were doing splendid work under the W.P.A. It was making the writers more social-minded, more articulate."

Again we got back to the problem that is on everyone's mind: fascism or communism.

"Please make this clear: I hate capitalism. I cannot favor any system of society where people starve in the midst of plenty."

Pearl Buck did not make herself too clear on the question of Spain.

"I'm such a pacifist," she said. "I hate wars of all kinds. And I am really a liberal. I do believe there honestly can be such a viewpoint even today. Capitalism shocks me. There are some things about communism, however, that leave me in a state of question, of uncertainty, as yet. You know," she added, "the discipline, regimentation, and oppression of minor groups, remind me too much of religious denominationalism."

Curiously, her own firm convictions, her very definite if simple manner, also gave me the impression of a steel-minded, passionate propagandist on a leash.

Pearl Buck studies the problems facing all questioning people today. She says she "believes in the principles of communism." She thinks that the success of the Soviet Union—where Communist principles are particularly adaptable to the Russian mentality—is still not a satisfactory criterion. She says she would like to see it tried again in a western country.

"Fortunately," she says, "we do not have to make a choice of fascism or communism in America today. But if I had to face the problem now, I would choose communism."

I asked Miss Buck whether she thought there is a possibility of fascism developing in America.

"Yes, she said. "There is a streak of puritanism in the American temperament which could easily be led into fascist channels."

If that is so, I followed up, what can we do about it? A people's front as in France and Spain? A labor party?

"Yes," she said.

It was a pleasure to talk with one who was so deeply concerned with the world we live in, with problems of progress and reaction; of politics, war, religion, art, and literature. One, to use her own phrase, so social-minded and articulate. One felt that in all of Pearl Buck's attitude of "question and uncertainty," there was so much honesty and genuine culture that it would guide her unerringly when she made her choice.

Ben Yomen

"Mr. Finklepuss is expecting us, so we'll wait"

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Timberland Talks Turkey

The loggers of Minnesota find the farmer-labor government a staunch ally in the current strike

By Irene Paull

IT was fifteen below zero in Duluth. The wind was sharp. Lake Superior was a raging field of snow. Up the hills from Michigan Street marched an angry regiment of men . . . perhaps a thousand or more striking lumberjacks out of the camps of Minnesota on a 450-mile strike front from Hovland on the North Shore to the Big Fall Line. They pushed open the door of the Labor Temple and swept in like a blizzard, covered with snow, and with the frost shining in their beards.

"Double-Breasted Joe," fighting lumberjack, who had seen duty on a hundred strike fronts from the West Coast to Canada, elbowed his way through the snarling horde of men, crying in a voice shaking with rage, "Who'sa sell 'a strike? Who'sa buy 'a strike? Who'sa da low-down snake who'sa gonna sell out a poor workin' man?"

Andrew Leaf, representative of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners of America, a Hutcheson man, disappeared through the back door. With him went several of the employers. Remaining to explain was a small group of strikers who said they had been called into a secret meeting to discuss the strike behind the back of the timber workers' union.

The Minnesota Timber Workers, Local 2776 of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, were a tough rank and file. The old Jacks said, "We're old-timers and we'll be gone before many more winters. But we're fightin' for you boys. We don't want you to live the dog's life we lived. We don't want you beatin' around without a family from one crumby camp to another 'till you end up on 'Skid Road' without the change for a match. We've been in strikes before. We fought tear gas and guns and bayonets. We lived on fish from the West Coast mountain streams. You got a governor who's givin' you relief, sendin' you blankets, mattresses to sleep on. Today I ate a grapefruit for the first time in my life. . . . You got a governor who doesn't transport scabs. He opened up a transient camp for our pickets on the North Shore with a chef and a baker. . . . You boys don't know what fightin' means. You don't know what it means to have to be radical. . . . This here's Minnesota, and not Idaho. We got the strike in the bag, and who's gonna sell us out?"

The following day a group of them filed into the Court House and sat down quietly in Memorial Hall. Their president, little Fred Lequier, quick, dark, part Chippewa Indian, sat down at the table with Governor Benson's investigating committee. The Jacks were confident. They had asked the governor for this committee so the state might know the dog's life of its most exploited group of workers. They were confident, because Governor Benson had fulfilled the promise he made in his wire to the strikers in which he said:

> Upon receipt of letter I contacted state relief administrator Zimmerman and am assured that provision will be made to provide relief to timber workers where such aid is required. If any attempt is made at strike-breaking, kindly advise me, and I will have representative of state industrial commission make personal investigation. . . .

Even many of the old Wobblies, who had never had faith in political action, felt a new confidence in the chances of a workingman in a Farmer-Labor state, where the governor, in deeds as well as words, was on their side, where their congressman, John Bernard, wired to Relief Administrator Zimmerman, "Please endeavor to help starving workers on strike for decent wages and working conditions. Send relief immediately to Timber Workers' Union Local 2776," which same congressman had raised a lone voice in behalf of the struggling workers of Spain. These were the Wobblies for whom the C.I.O. was a more realistic industrial unionism than the I.W.W. . . . they had grown with the times.

Reticent at first, but encouraged by the governor's investigating committee, they told of sleeping in airless camps infested with bedbugs and lice, with no bathing or washing facilities of any kind, with flies carrying infection from the latrine to the kitchen; of sleeping two in double-deck bunks, on a little hay covered with blankets encrusted with filth, with the stench of manure, sweaty underwear, tobacco smoke, rubbers, and spit; with wet socks, coats, shirts of eighty men or so strung on poles over the stove in their sleeping room to dry; where a man had his foot crushed and lay uncared for in camp for five days, until one of the horses got sick, and a veterinarian was called in to take care of the horse, and incidentally took a look at the man; where they had to sleep under the same roof with the horses; where for twenty-five days' work a man could earn as little as $1.40. They elaborated afterwards with Paul Bunyan yarns spun out of bitter facts. . . . "Tom hung his hat on a nail in Milton Manners's camp, and when he took it off the nail three days later, there was enough bedbugs in it to cook a stew for forty men." . . . "That's nothing . . . when you turn over your plate at Savage's, the cockroaches start from under the plate like horses on a race track. If you put a harness on the cockroaches, they'd haul the stew pot into the bunkhouse, and the men wouldn't have to come in for dinner."

THE investigation continued for two days. During this time, the governor's committee had shared the impression that this was a clean-cut fight between these thousands of disinherited timber workers and the few Weyerhauser-controlled camps, but in the last hours of the investigation, after the committee had heard the employers and the workers, a group of men sprang up spontaneously from the audience and cried, "How about us? How about the small farmers and truckers? There are thousands of us in northern Minnesota who haul timber for a living, with large families dependent on us. The strikers are dumping our trucks. If we can't fulfill our contracts with the paper mills, we'll be ruined. You're the governor's committee. We're the farmers. How about us?"

Rockwell Kent

This changed the complexion of the whole situation. The investigating committee and the leaders of the union were alert to the political implications of this situation. Here was the case of a Farmer-Labor administration, placed in power by both the workers and farmers of Minnesota, making possible, by the provision of relief to strikers, a prolonged strike of a group of its workers, which, if it continued, would ruin and impoverish thousands of farmers and many small jobbers, who were scarcely more than lumberjacks themselves. These farmers and small jobbers, most of them ardent Farmer-Laborites, were facing Governor Benson's investigating committee with a defiant, "What about us?"

Immediately, the committee contacted this group of farmers and urged them to appoint a spokesman. Their spokesman presented the case of the small farmer and ended with a vicious attack on the strike and the character of the strikers. The owner-operators applauded.

Again the committee contacted the group of farmers. The fact that the farmers and operators seemed banded together in common cause, showed the strikers the seriousness of their mistake in not working out in advance some solution to this problem, the necessity of forestalling any suffering on the part of these

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farmers and of drawing them over to their side, where their class interests rightfully placed them.

UPON investigation, the committee discovered that this "spokesman" of the small farmers was actually not a farmer at all, but a good-sized jobber. The farmers declared that this "spokesman" had presented their case, but not their sentiments, that they did not sympathize with his attack on the strike and the strikers, that they did not appreciate the applause of the big operators. The committee had set to work to find a solution to the problem of the small farmers, when the operators opened negotiations—offering the workers union recognition with a closed shop, an 18-percent wage increase, and a government investigation of camp conditions.

The strikers voted two to one to accept these proposals, and the strikers' attorney set to work on the contract, when suddenly there was a breach in the negotiations. The operators backed down on the "closed shop." The strike was in deadlock.

On a quiet Sunday morning, little Fred Lequier, darting through the Spalding Hotel on his way to a phone booth to put in a call to Governor Benson, stopped suddenly at the sound of a familiar voice, talking too loud from a nearby booth. It was Andrew Leaf. He was talking over long-distance telephone to a man who, Fred surmised, was Mr. Hutcheson. Fred heard him say: "The operators refuse to recognize the union and the closed shop, but our boys are all going back to work tomorrow morning."

Panting with excitement, Fred hurried through the lobby back to strike headquarters. Then suddenly the streets were black with marching men. Hundreds of lumberjacks were storming up the hill from West Michigan Street. They tied up traffic on Superior Street. They left automobiles, buses, streetcars, pedestrians standing aghast as they moved grimly towards the Spalding Hotel. They took Andrew Leaf by the nape of his neck, out of the loving embrace of the operators in the hotel room where they were closeted, marched him to strike headquarters, lifted him onto a bench, and demanded, "Explain yourself!" Policemen came to the rescue, put the frightened man in a car while the strikers shouted, "You take him to the train and get him out of town quick before we knock him into the middle of Lake Superior!"

THE RANK AND FILE, Minnesota Timber Workers' Local 2776 of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, had decided to settle their own strike.

George Sahlman, state congressman from Cloquet, the paper and pulpwood district, was one of the members of Governor Benson's investigating committee. Sahlman is one of the most promising and admirable men in the state legislature. He is solid, incorruptible, a man who rose out of the ranks of the workers to represent all that is strong and good in the progressive people of Minnesota. Commenting on the part of the Farmer-Labor Party in the struggles of labor in Minnesota, he said, "Olson in 1934 was ahead of his party. Benson is carrying out the liberal policies of Olson, but carrying them farther, because the times are more liberal, the party is ripe for a more liberal program. . . .

"I think it is absolutely necessary that we get together at once on the National Farmer-Labor Party rather than wait until the next national election, when we can have the excuse of not having time enough to organize. The Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party must take the lead. The country is looking to Minnesota for this leadership, and the possibilities for cooperation with farm and labor movements throughout the country are greater today than ever. We feel certain that our trade-union brothers fighting for industrial unionism will take part in this organization before it is too late. They realize now that the trade unions need political power as well as economic power or they cannot stand up much longer against the onslaught of the lords of finance and industry."

★ ★ ★

The Unknown Soldier

Out of this tomb I speak:
I have had praise enough to make
A movie hero's cheek
Blush to the hair roots, but I loathe it all—
I stifle in this unknown soldier's tomb.
I was a wastrel who despised the gloom
Of solemn dignity, went winging free
From town to town with other birds like me,—
Seeing the sights, stage-johnnying the girls,
Getting all tangled up in tangled curls
Till there was nothing else to do but run
And try another town. An hour's fun,
Then heartache, broken vows, and one dull trip
Across the ocean on a cattle ship
Doling out grain. The critters mooed all night,
And drove me almost crazy with their fright.
But stuck in Liverpool with five weeks' pay
I found a pub and drank there twice a day
To work the fantods off and see the town.
The sour English slums soon got me down,
And I was back in Uncle Sam's domain
When war broke out. A military train
Rolled drums and banners through my crazy brain
Till I said, "Well, here goes," signed up to fight
Like many another harum-scarum wight;
Got sent across, went out and raised high hell,
And found myself next day A.W.O.L.
In Gay Paree where Yanks were treated fine
As long as dough held out. Then up the line
My regiment was ordered. Was I scared?
Such horrors reached us of the way men fared
In front-line trenches! (No one closed an eye
Except at noon time when the sun was high
And warm enough to let them catch a wink;
The clammy mud and vile inhuman stink
Of human bodies rotting, and the drag
Of midnight hours that would sag and sag
Till some put pork on strings and played with rats
To keep them from completely going bats.)—
All this was told us by the grape-vine route
Till we said, "Why the hell did we come out

Lab

To this God-awful country overseas,
For days of horror, boredom, and disease,
And cannon roaring, booming overhead?"
The most of us would rather far be dead
Than live like this. My soldiering was brief—
I poked my fool head up to find relief,
And found it for a time. Then diggers came
Looking for some of us unknown to fame,
Shoveled me up and carried me back home
To mix me with my cheated country's loam
In this boneyard. My rest was at an end,
For solemn statesmen came. Have I no friend
Can save me from their chatter and their flowers,
Their insincerities, their pomps and powers?
The weight of them is heavy on my breast.

O buddies, pacing here to guard my rest,
Have mercy on me, spirit me away
To some lone country graveyard where the spray
Of their continual spouting cannot find
My tired ears. Let me sleep with my kind
As you will sleep when your brief watch is done,
And all retreats and reveilles are one.

Fame is a heavy thing—that lot is best
That goes the common way of all the rest.

WILBERT SNOW.

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The Moscow Trials

In this first of a series of three editorial statements, we analyze the testimony's meaning in terms of Trotskyism

An Editorial

"The more serious the practical result, the more responsible and 'noted' the people are who have committed this act of strike-breaking, the more emphatically must the strike-breakers be thrown out, and the more unpardonable it would be to hesitate on account of former 'services' rendered by the strike-breakers."—*V. I. Lenin in a letter to the members of the Bolshevik Party, demanding the expulsion of Kamenev and Zinoviev for endangering the October uprising by revealing and opposing the plan in the Menshevik press. Dated Oct. 18, 1917.*

FROM all sorts of quarters come "explanations," ranging from the bizarre to the illogical and ill-informed, of the Moscow trials, now that the second group of terrorists has been tried, in accordance with Soviet law, at an open trial, attended by hundreds of newspapermen and diplomatic observers. Bitter enemies of the Soviet Union, the working class, and democracy rush to the defense of Trotsky and confessed criminals; no such sympathy was ever lavished by such reactionary sources on a Communist defendant in a capitalist court. Molehills of invention and ungrounded suspicions are accepted as adequate basis for accusing the responsible leaders of the Soviet government of staging a colossal "frame-up"; but a mountain of confessions and evidence is airily dismissed. "Shock" and "horror" are the words reserved for the sentences meted out to the defendants; but the shocking and horrible crimes committed and admitted by the defendants are ignored.

Some of these alibis for the terrorists are quite original: hypnotism, drugs, a confessional epidemic, black magic. These novel explanations have taken the place of the more popular objections raised against the trial last August. It was then charged that Zinoviev, Kamenev, and fourteen others, had confessed to treason and assassination because freedom was promised them in return. The story went that they carried out their part of the bargain, but the executions which followed constituted a double-cross. This little scenario no longer attracts the gullible, because Radek, Piatakov, and the others in the late trial could not have been similarly tricked into confessions.

Or again, it was argued by the Trotskyists and their mouthpieces that the proof of an official frame-up lay in the "former 'services' rendered" by the defendants. It was not explained how men, while too high-minded to be terrorists, could yet sink low enough to confess to non-existent crimes of such magnitude. Their confessions make them either undeniable criminals or unutterable cowards. In either case, their high-mindedness is an invention. Max Schachtman, the American Trotskyist, pleads for the terrorists on the grounds that their records are incompatible with the charges. But he himself accounts for their confessions by describing them as "politically disemboweled, demoralized, most of them broken physically and all of them morally." If their records are incompatible with treason and terror, are they any more compatible with Schachtman's "explanation" of their confessions? This kind of defense rests upon the erection of a fictitious wall between demoralization and moral break-down, and terrorism.

The editor of the *Socialist Call* has rushed to the defense of the second terrorist center on two grounds: (1) the alleged terrorists were "so completely unsuccessful in touching a hair on Stalin's head"; (2) Stalin "is ready to kill the makers of the revolution to prove his sincerity about giving up the idea of a world revolution." Defense No. 1 would make proof of terrorism rest on the successful execution of the plot. This argument suggests an inverted expression of disappointment at the failure of the terrorists "in touching a hair on Stalin's head." What is most revealing is that the murder of Sergei Kirov, the murder of hundreds of workers through sabotage and destruction and the tremendous toll of damage done to Soviet industry and railroads, should mean nothing at all. Defense No. 2 rests on a simple, flagrant contradiction. According to the *Socialist Call,* Radek and his henchmen could not have committed the crime to which they confessed *because* they were "makers of the revolution"; but Stalin and his associates in the leadership of the Communist Party and the Soviet government did commit a "frame-up" *despite* the fact they too were "makers of the revolution." One standard for confessed terrorists and another for Soviet leaders!

Another familiar defense of the terrorists takes the form of cataloguing the positions of trust held by each of the defendants. Under ordinary circumstances, this type of defense would denote a perverted moral code, for it is usually agreed that the greater the responsibility and trust, the more reprehensible the crime. Plekhanov, father of Russian Marxism and Lenin's teacher, was far more brilliant and historically important than any of the defendants, yet supported the czarist war. Savinkov was noted as a gifted writer and brilliant organizer among the Social Revolutionaries, yet worked with the Allied general staff to destroy the young Soviet republic. We do not excuse these men their mistakes and their crimes because of their record or their positions of trust; we more strongly condemn them because their errors were more costly. That is as true of Radek and the others as of Plekhanov.

Despite the posts of responsibility once held by the defendants, it is a myth that they were "the brains and conscience of the Russian Revolution," apparently the *Nation's* last line of defense. Whatever was valuable in their work was such only when they worked under the direction and discipline of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. But these are the very men who flinched at the most critical moments in the life of the young Soviet Republic. It is a myth that Trotsky is an "old Bolshevik"; he was a most bitter enemy of Lenin from 1903 right through the World War; he joined the Bolshevik Party in August 1917 and not before. It was Trotsky and Bukharin who almost caused irreparable damage by their intransigent opposition to Lenin and Stalin on the Brest-Litovsk issue. Both Kamenev and Zinoviev actually opposed the uprising in October; the expulsion of both was demanded by Lenin after they had violated party discipline and endangered the success of the revolution by revealing the plans for the uprising in a Menshevik paper. So much for their revolutionary brains and consciences. Radek was certainly not the brains of the Russian Revolution; in fact, he was expressly charged with a large part of the responsibility for the failure of the German revolution in 1923. As for Piatakov, Sokolnikov, and a few others, they organized an opposition, known as "Left Communism," against Lenin as early as 1918.

The only valid understanding of the terrorist trials is to be found in the careers and past political policies of these men. More than ten years ago, they entered upon a political line of opposition to the policies identified with Lenin and Stalin, which finally led them to terrorism after every other means had been exhausted.

Defendants like Radek and Piatakov formed a "Left Communist" opposition to Lenin as early as 1918. Trotsky came out in opposition on the Brest-Litovsk issue in 1918 and on the trade-union issue after that. A "Workers' Opposition" opposed Lenin on a syndicalist platform. Just as Trotsky had organized all the anti-Bolshevik factions into a bloc in August 1912, so he united all the oppositions on a public platform in October 1923 on the by now familiar charge that the existing leadership was ruining the country. First Kamenev and Zinoviev fought Trotsky. Then they made their peace with him and joined his opposition bloc. In 1926-7, the Trotsky opposition openly flouted the discipline of the party by organizing abortive street and factory demonstrations, a secret printing press, and finally a dual Central Committee. They regularly

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recanted at every party congress, promised to disband their faction, always to gain a breathing space for further opposition work. When the point was reached where an opposition party was imminent, the oppositionists were expelled at the end of 1927.

In these years of open factional strife, the opposition used every known trick to come to power. Their Achilles heel was failure to gain any kind of mass following. The Soviet masses saw every one of their policies refuted by events. So, as early as July 1927, Trotsky began to play around with the idea of coming to power in a crisis resulting from a war between the Soviet Union and imperialist powers. In a letter to the Control Commission on July 11, 1927, Trotsky compared himself to Clemenceau, who overthrew the French Cabinet in 1914 by taking advantage of the crisis created when the Germans were within shelling distance of Paris. "It is necessary to restore Clemenceau's tactics, who, as is well known, rose against the French government when the Germans were eighty kilometers from Paris," Trotsky wrote. Those who pretend to find it incredible that Trotsky formed an alliance with the Nazis and Japanese imperialism, simply reveal their ignorance of Trotsky's past. Trotsky's method has always been to give left phraseology to essentially reactionary policies and actions. In this respect, it will be recalled that Lenin called for the defeat of one's own imperialist government during the World War. In his alliance with the fascists, Trotsky turned Lenin's doctrine of "defeatism" on its head. First, he calls the Soviet government reactionary; in his latest writings, "totalitarian." He considers his coming to power the preëminent objective. But peaceful means of overthrowing the Soviet government have already been exhausted. Hence, all that is left is a war in which this "totalitarian" government shall be defeated and Trotsky hoisted to power in the ensuing crisis. His choice of allies is inevitable: the fascist enemies of the Soviet Union, the chief plotters of world war. This logic of Trotskyism, whatever the pompous phraseology, leads to an openly fascist conclusion.

After his expulsion, Trotsky gave up hope that he could come to power peacefully. In a pamphlet, *The Soviet Union and the Fourth International,* he asked: "Is it possible to remove the bureaucracy 'peacefully'?" His answer: "No normal 'constitutional' ways remain to remove the ruling clique"; and again: "The bureaucracy can be compelled to yield power into the hands of the proletarian vanguard [i. e., the Trotskyists] only by *force.*" (p. 25, Trotsky's emphasis.) And the "Clemenceau thesis" was again hinted: "A major historical test—which may be a war—will determine the relation of forces." (p. 25.) The Trotskyists, as in Schachtman's pamphlet, called for violent "revolutionary method" (p. 131). But this could not be a "revolution" in the accepted Marxist sense, which means a change in *class* relations; its aim could be simply and solely to "remove" the present leaders and install his clique. Terrorism consists in precisely this, that instead of mass struggle, you aim at wiping out individuals. Trotsky's written incitements to violence amount to just this, and his misuse of the word "revolution" cannot obscure it.

There you have the paranoiac logic of Trotskyism, which leads to terrorism and treason in alliance with the most reactionary war-making forces in the world today.

If we consider the trials as the culmination of an opposition movement which resorted to increasingly desperate and despicable means (as it failed to overcome its complete divorcement from the masses and as its political failures piled up), the testimony at the trial has much to teach us about the road from oppositionism to counter-revolution.

Reconstructing the story, we get this: Radek and other oppositionists promised to renounce Trotskyism in 1929 and were treated with extreme leniency; they were admitted back into the party. Some, like Kamenev and Zinoviev, who were again expelled in 1932, were caught double-dealing, but not all. The rest continued to maintain contact with Trotsky, to regain contact with other oppositionists, to rebuild their political fences, badly shattered in 1927-8. For a time, they lay low. But by the end of 1932, a bloc of Trotskyists and Zinovievists (corresponding to the 1926 bloc) formed a terrorist center on instructions from Trotsky. The "new line" had been brewing at least from the summer of 1931, when Piatakov met Trotsky's son, Sedov, in Berlin.

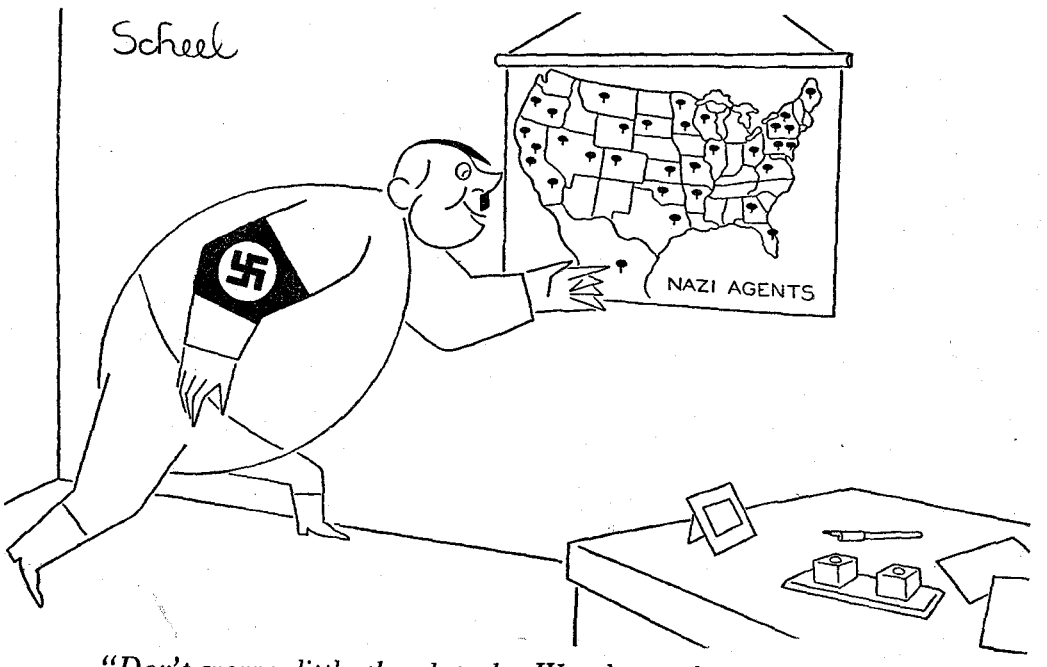
"There cannot be any question of organizing a mass movement," Piatakov testified Sedov told him. "If we undertake any mass work, it means immediate collapse." Illegal terrorist work being dangerous, it was decided to form a secondary terrorist center as a reserve in case the first collapsed. This was the Radek-Piatakov center, organized in 1933, which changed later from a reserve center into a parallel center contesting for equal status because this one, composed solely of Trotskyists, had little faith in Zinoviev's nerve.

The third terrorist center, implicated by Radek but not yet put on trial, was headed by Bukharin and corresponded to the "Right opposition" in the Soviet Union after 1928. Radek received three letters from Trotsky. The first, in March or February 1932, induced him to return to the path of active oppositionism. Radek testified that it ended approximately as follows: "You must take into account the experience of the previous period and understand that it is impossible to return to old methods, that the struggle has entered a new phase with new features."

This "new phase" consisted of (1) terrorism against the leaders of the Soviet Union; (2) treason and espionage in alliance with the Nazis and Japanese imperialists for the defeat of the Soviet government in war; (3) restoration of capitalism as a necessary concomitant of the defeat, though, according to Piatakov, "Radek and I were then uneasy that during the economic retreat after we seized power, the Zinovievite section of the bloc would go too far," but Trotsky wrote Radek that they were "mistaken" when they "thought the retreat would be insignificant." As for this third point, it is significant that Trotsky, back in January 1931, wrote an article which speculated about the fact that "the political forms in which the restoration [of capitalism in the Soviet Union] would take place" is "an independent and complicated question," admitting "only of a conditional answer." (*Militant,* Jan. 15, 1931.)

This gigantic conspiracy to foment war for power, finally appalled Radek when realization came that the conspirators were but "the outpost of foreign intelligence services." "We ceased to be masters of our own actions to the slightest degree." But meanwhile, the lives of Soviet workers were ruthlessly sacrificed to the megalomaniac in Norway and now in Mexico, sabotage and wrecking were carried on by the smaller fry, and Trotskyism became the rose-colored outpost of fascism.

There you have a cycle completed.



"Don't worry, little thumb tack. We always deny the truth." Theodore Scheel

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READERS' FORUM

A letter from Mauritz A. Hallgren to the "American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky"

Mr. Felix Morrow, Acting Secretary,
American Committee for the Defense of
Leon Trotsky,
Room 511, 22 East 17th Street,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

It has become necessary for me to clarify my position with respect to the Moscow trials and particularly with respect to Trotsky's relation thereto.

Since joining your committee I have given deep and earnest thought to the whole problem here involved. I have examined, so far as they have been made available in this country, all of the documents bearing upon the case. I have followed closely all of the news reports. I have consulted some of the reports made by non-Communists who attended the first trial. I have carefully studied the published arguments of the partisans on both sides. And I have just as carefully restudied the writings of Trotsky concerning his case against Stalinism and his theory of the permanent revolution, that is, such of his writings on these questions as have been published to date.

I believed when I joined your committee, and I still believe, in the right of asylum for persons exiled because of their political or other beliefs. Trotsky has been granted asylum in Mexico and this part of the committee's task would seem, therefore, to have been brought to a close.

Second, there was in my mind at that time sufficient doubt concerning certain aspects of the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial to lead me to suppose that the trial was not entirely genuine. This doubt hinged upon the possibility that, while Zinoviev and his associates had been taken in conspiracy (for I have never seen any good reason to doubt their own guilt), they had been promised mitigation of their sentences in return for a public confession that would implicate Trotsky as well in their crimes. In view of this doubt I was glad to join with the committee in endeavoring to provide Trotsky with an opportunity to answer the charges brought against him. This was not because of any desire to be "just" or "liberal" in the meaningless sense that those terms are usually employed by American liberals, but simply because I would have regarded it as hardly less reprehensible and dangerous to the future of socialism for Stalin and his colleagues to be perverting Soviet justice to their own personal ends as for Trotsky to be plotting to overthrow the government of the only socialist republic in the world.

Very soon after the first trial, Zinoviev and his associates were executed. It had been asserted that they had been promised lenient treatment if they would for their part publicly accuse Trotsky of having conspired with them to overthrow Stalin and the Soviet government. In truth, it was largely upon this supposition that rested the contention that the first trial was a "frame-up." But now that the men were put to death Trotsky and his adherents declared that they, the defendants, had been "double-crossed." To the Trotskyists this was further proof of their contention that the first trial had been "framed." To the disinterested student, however, it might just as easily have proved the contrary. After all, it is one of the simplest rules of logic that one cannot use a premise to prove a thesis and then use the denial of that premise to prove the same thesis. Logically, therefore, one should have looked elsewhere for an explanation of the executions, and the only other possible explanation was that the men were actually put to death in the regular course of justice and for the single reason that they were guilty of the crimes charged against them. Still it was possible, despite the rise of this counter-doubt, that they had been "double-crossed."

Now we have come to the second trial. What is the situation? The men now on trial cannot possibly be under any delusion as to their fate. They must know and they do know that they will be put to death. Despite this they do not hesitate to confess their crimes. Why? The only conceivable answer is that they are guilty. Surely it cannot and will not be argued this time as well that there has been a "deal," for men like Radek are obviously not so stupid as to believe that they are going to save their lives in that manner after what happened to Kamenev and Zinoviev. It has been said that they have been tortured into confessing. But what greater and more effective torture can there be than knowledge of certain death? In any case, the men in the courtroom have shown not the slightest evidence of having been tortured or of being under duress. It is said by some that they have been hypnotized into confessing, or that the prosecution, working upon its knowledge of Slav psychology, has somehow trapped these men into confessing deeds of which they are not guilty. For example, the unanimity with which the men have been confessing is taken as proof that the confessions are false and have been obtained by some mysterious means. Yet these assertions rest upon no tangible or logical proof whatever. The idea that some inexplicable form of oriental mesmerism has been used is one that sound reason must reject as utterly fantastic. The very unanimity of the defendants, far from proving that this trial is also a "frame-up," appears to me to prove directly the contrary. For if these men are innocent, then certainly at least one of the three dozen, knowing that he faced death in any case, would have blurted out the truth. It is inconceivable that out of this great number of defendants, all should lie when lies would not do one of them any good. But why look beyond the obvious for the truth, why seek in mysticism or in dark magic for facts that are before one's very nose? Why not accept the plain fact that the men are guilty? And this fact, if accepted with regard to the men now on trial, must also be accepted with regard to the men who were executed after the first trial.

I now see no valid reason for believing that the defendants in the first trial were unfairly dealt with. Certainly it cannot now be maintained that they were "double-crossed," for that contention falls of its own weight when we stop for a moment to consider the fact that the Soviet government has brought a second group of men to trial on the same charges. Since the government could not hope to induce the second group to confess under the pressure of false promises, it is reasonable to suppose that it did not rely upon false promises in the first case. Moreover, I am now completely convinced that the defendants in the first trial were given every opportunity to clear themselves, that they were denied none of the rights of impartial justice. It is significant that those who contend that this was not the case have offered no evidence at all, apart from their own unsupported allegations and suspicions, in substantiation of their contention. On the other side we have not only the court record, but also the unsolicited reports of non-Communist observers who were present at the trial.

One such statement has been presented by D. N. Pritt, English lawyer and a Labor Party representative in the House of Commons. Mr. Pritt can by no means be accused of sympathy with the Communists or with Stalin. He has, indeed, stood with the right wing of the Labor Party. But he has also been trained in law, while, moreover, unlike Walter Citrine and others who have charged that there was a gross miscarriage of justice, he was present in person at the trial in Moscow. He reported later that he was "completely satisfied" that the trial was "properly conducted" and that the accused were "fairly and judicially treated." He added that their appearance and demeanor were such as to indicate the "absence of any ill treatment or fear." He declared that there was "no ground for insinuating any unfairness in form or substance." His view has been confirmed by all other non-Communist observers at the trial whose reports I have consulted. To be sure, Trotsky has now taken to denouncing Pritt for having rendered this "service" to "Stalinism." But Trotsky has produced no evidence at all to show that Pritt was in any way prejudiced in favor of the Stalin government. Indeed, if I may repeat, while the evidence that the men were fairly tried appears both substantial and convincing, the counter-charge that they were not fairly tried is backed up by no evidence of any kind, convincing or otherwise. The same can be said for the conduct of the second trial so far as that has been reported to date.

It is a curious fact, which seems to have escaped liberals both in this country and in England, that the Soviet government is hurting itself far more than it could possibly help itself by holding these trials, especially at this time. The very fact that the liberals and Socialists have been aroused by this event, the very fact that this defense committee has been formed, reveals the great extent to which the Soviet Union is being harmed. What has Stalin to gain by taking action that is tending to alienate these elements? It is obvious that he has nothing whatever to gain. On the contrary, he stands to lose a good deal. At the moment there is grave danger of intervention. The Soviet government needs all the support it can get from workers and liberals and democrats in other countries. Without such support, the rising tide of fascism might soon engulf Soviet Russia—whereupon, of course, Stalin and his government would inevitably disappear.

Shall we suppose, then, that Stalin has stupidly thrown all caution to the wind merely to wreak vengeance upon his personal enemies? Shall we suppose that he is anxious to have popular fronts erected to help guard the Soviet Union against an external danger and at the same time is so blind as to take action that might destroy these popular fronts in order to satisfy some purely personal whim or ambition? Shall we suppose that he is so thick-headed as not to appreciate the gravity of this external danger not only to the Soviet Union but to himself as well? Now no one will say that Stalin is stupid. Even the Trotskyists complain that the menace of "Stalinism" lies not in stupidity but in diabolical cleverness. It must follow, since the Stalin government is apparently risking a good deal by holding these trials, that it has detected an internal danger hardly less grave than the external danger. In short, it must follow that the government has uncovered a conspiracy against itself, the evidence of which is so abundant and the peril from which is so apparent that it dare not withhold its hand, even though in destroying the conspiracy it may alienate its democratic support abroad and so increase the external danger.

Until now we have considered only the conspirators in Moscow. Little has been said of Leon Trotsky. Is he guilty, too? The conspirators say that he is. He denies it most emphatically (and brings other charges of equal gravity against Stalin). We have the Moscow evidence. Where is Trotsky's evidence? One may grant that he has not had his day in court. And one may grant that toward the end of his stay in Norway he was literally held incommunicado. Yet he has been out of Norway now for several weeks, and still no tangible proof of his contentions has come from him, no documents, not even anything in the way of circumstantial state-

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ments. He has issued nothing but negative denials. Even some of these denials are of a questionable sort. His gratuitous attack upon D. N. Pritt, offered without any supporting facts, certainly did not help him. His statement that he had never heard of Vladimir Romm, a leading Soviet journalist and for years a stellar correspondent for Tass and later for *Izvestia,* is simply incredible and goes far, indeed, toward discrediting Trotsky. But this is the sort of "proof" he has been cabling to the New York *Times,* the Baltimore *Sun* and the Manchester *Guardian.*

If Trotsky is innocent and has the documentary proof of his innocence that he says he has, why does he not produce it? The Hearst press would be only too glad to publish it and pay Trotsky fabulously well for his documents. The New York *Times,* the London *Times,* and other bourgeois journals would likewise be only too happy to give space to his documents. The Manchester *Guardian* has stood by him through thick and thin in the last several months; it would not desert him now. It has been said that he intends to put his proof into the new book he is writing on Stalinism. And it might also be argued that it would be better for him to put his proof before the projected international commission that is to give him a hearing. But consider the absurdity, the astounding cynicism, of such an attitude. Here are men awaiting death on charges that Trotsky says are utterly false and here is Trotsky who contends that he can prove that they are false—and yet he withholds this indispensable proof for the sake of a book, or for the sake of an international inquiry not yet arranged! And here are countless liberals and Socialists who earnestly believe that justice is being destroyed at the command of Stalin, but who have not a shred of evidence to support this belief apart from their own fears and suspicions, and here is Trotsky who has the essential evidence—and yet he fails to produce it when it is most needed!

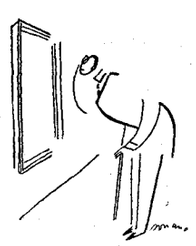
Consider one thing further. Trotsky has in recent years written many books and pamphlets expounding his doctrine of the permanent revolution and purporting to expose Stalin and Stalinism. He contends, not once but again and again, that Stalin must be overthrown if the revolution is to be saved. Now either Trotsky's arguments and exhortations are wholly passive and academic, in which case they might well be forgotten, or else he means that they should be acted upon. It is obvious, however, that Trotsky is playing no passive role, that he is consciously the agitator, and that he regards himself as the active leader of the movement against Stalin. That stands out from every line he has written on the problem and it is apparent from all his activities. But how is Stalin to be overthrown? It is clear, even to Trotsky's followers, that there can be no hope of provoking a popular uprising within the Soviet Union. It could only be done by foreign intervention, or by a conspiracy within the Soviet government, or by a combination of the two. Through whom might such a conspiracy be undertaken? Obviously, through persons within the government who have had experience in such work in the past. Even more obviously, by old conspirators who believe, or once believed, in Trotsky's doctrine. And what have the Moscow trials revealed? They have revealed precisely this kind of conspiracy. They have revealed the very sort of plot against the Soviet government that Trotsky's teachings call for!

To be sure, this in itself does not prove that Trotsky has conspired with the Moscow defendants. Yet the reasonable man is compelled to agree that, given Trotsky's known disposition to action and his forceful presentation of his own case against Stalin, the circumstantial evidence against him is very strong indeed. It might well be said, and it cannot be denied, that the Soviet government's case against Trotsky is not perfect. It has made mistakes. It has made assertions that are apparently contrary to fact. But then, there has never been a controversy in which the facts on one side have been all black and those on the other side pure white. One must judge these matters, not by any rigid or absolute standards, but by weighing the evidence. And in the present instance the preponderance of evidence is on the side of the Soviet government and clearly against Trotsky.

I readily agree that Stalin has his faults. I am far from agreeing with everything that the Soviet government and Comintern have done or are doing. Yet every fair-minded person must concede that under its present leadership the Soviet Union has made remarkable progress toward establishing socialism. It is only among the Nazis and Fascists and reactionaries in other countries, among a few groups within the Second International, and among the Trotskyists that it is contended that the Soviet Union under Stalin and his associates is moving, not toward socialism, but toward capitalism or Bonapartism or something called "Red fascism." Persons acquainted with the facts must and do consider these allegations preposterous. One who has an understanding of economics can readily see that it is socialism and nothing else that is being developed in Soviet Russia. To make any statement to the contrary is, in view of the established facts, mere wish-thinking—or deliberate distortion. This being so, any attack upon the Communist leadership in the Soviet Union, imperfect though that leadership might be, that has for its purpose the overthrow of the Soviet government must be regarded as a deliberate and malicious attack upon socialism itself. This does not mean that I regard the Soviet government as being above criticism. Far from it. But it does mean that I regard dishonest criticism or any effort to go beyond criticism (for example, an effort to destroy rather than to aid in the development of socialism in the Soviet Union) as a betrayal of socialism. And that, quite apart from the outcry against the Moscow trials, is the objective purpose of Trotsky's writings and agitational activities. If one is inclined to doubt this, one has only to compare Trotsky's writings on "Stalinism" with the Webbs' study of socialism in the Soviet Union.

Let us now sum up the situation. On the one hand we have the confessions of the Moscow defendants, the court record, the statements of disinterested observers at the first trial, and the reports on the second trial of such reputable journalists as Walter Duranty. These provide us with an abundance of evidence tending to prove that the defendants were fairly tried and that their guilt in conspiring to overthrow the Soviet government has been established. They also tend to prove that Trotsky participated in the conspiracy, or that he at least had guilty knowledge of it, though the direct proof of his part in the crime is not so substantial as that involving the men on trial. However, we also have his writings and they tend greatly to strengthen the presumption, if not of actual guilt, at least of moral responsibility. On the other hand, we have nothing concrete with which to offset the charge of conspiracy. We have only the unsupported allegations of Trotsky and the unverified fears and suspicions of numerous liberals and Socialists.

Possibly Trotsky can support his allegations. He should certainly not be denied the opportunity to produce the proof he says he has. But his reluctance or inability to produce his proof when it is most needed must count against him. Moreover, and this is a point of extreme importance, it has to be borne in mind that Trotsky is not a disinterested party. He does not come into court with clean hands. He is a sworn adversary of the Stalin government. It must be presumed, therefore, that he is at least equally as much interested, and in all probability far more interested, in carrying on his campaign to destroy the Stalin government as he is in obtaining abstract justice for himself. Let him state that it is justice alone that he desires, and then let him publicly promise that, in the event he fails to substantiate his allegations against the Soviet government, he will promptly cease his efforts to destroy that government. If he refuses to bind himself in this particular, the reasonable man must conclude that he is using his demand for justice solely as a means of enlisting additional support for his campaign against socialism in the Soviet Union. Chronologically, indeed, the evidence on this point is already against him. The outcry against the Moscow trials first came from the Trotskyists. It was they who first raised the charge that Soviet justice was being hamstrung by Stalin. It was not until later that certain disinterested liberals took up the cry. There can be no question that the Trotskyists knew, when they shouted "persecution," that they would win the sympathy and perhaps the active aid of these liberals. And there can be little question that this rather than justice was their true objective. Surely if they really believed, as they asserted, that the Stalin government knew no law and no justice, then they could not have expected the liberals to help obtain justice from the Stalin government for them. And as they still maintain this position, it is only logical to suppose that their real purpose in appealing to the liberals was not to win justice for themselves, but to win liberal support for Trotskyism, that is, for Trotsky's campaign against socialism in the Soviet Union, and to do so in the name of that holy but meaningless liberal principle known as abstract justice.



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In any case, at least until Trotsky comes into court with his own hands clean, I shall remain convinced that the present liberal movement to win justice for him is nothing more than a Trotskyist maneuver against the Soviet Union and against socialism. I am equally convinced, as I must be under the circumstances, that the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky has, perhaps unwittingly, become an instrument of the Trotskyists for political intervention against the Soviet Union. Indeed, apart from the considerations cited above, it is abundantly plain that the whole approach and phraseology of the committee has been radically altered since the committee was formed. For example, those who were invited to join were asked to do so in order to provide Trotsky with "the fullest opportunity to state his case." But now the committee's literature talks of "working for a complete and impartial investigation of the Moscow trials." The implications of this change in attitude are too obvious to need emphasizing here. It is the liberal who would give Trotsky an opportunity to be heard, but it is only the Trotskyist (or someone else with an ax to grind where the Communist Party is concerned) who would demand the sort of political intervention that would be required to undertake "a complete and impartial investigation of the Moscow trials." This is nothing but propaganda. It shows all too plainly that the Trotskyists have captured the committee.

Perhaps the liberal members are not aware of the real nature of the committee. But that cannot be true of the political members, of the Trotskyists and others, who have but one purpose and that is to use the committee as a springboard for new attacks upon the Soviet Union. I do not intend under any circumstances to allow myself to become a party to any arrangement that has for its objective purpose (whatever might be its subjective justification) the impairment or destruction of the socialist system now being built in Soviet Russia. You will, therefore, withdraw my name as a member of the committee.

It may be unnecessary to point out that I speak for no party and no faction. I do not now belong and have never belonged to any political party or political organization. I speak for myself alone.

It is, however, necessary to add that I am putting copies of this letter at the disposal of certain individuals and groups who no doubt will be interested in its contents.

Respectfully,

MAURITZ A. HALLGREN.

Glenwood, Md., January 27, 1937.

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ESTABLISHED 1911

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Roosevelt and the Auto Strike

IT appears now that the American press was a trifle hasty in exhibiting its almost indecent editorial elation over President Roosevelt's rebuke to John L. Lewis, following his call for presidential support of auto labor's right to collective bargaining. The widespread attacks on Lewis's strategy have thus far played directly into the union's hands. Emboldened by Roosevelt's remark, "There come moments when statements, conversation, and headlines are not in order," John P. Sloan, Jr., president of General Motors, rejected Frances Perkins's call to a conference with union officials. There followed immediately presidential rebuke No. 2, aimed at Mr. Sloan.

"I regard it as a very unfortunate decision on his part," Roosevelt declared at a press conference. Miss Perkins was more emphatic: "I still think," she said, "that General Motors have made a great mistake, perhaps the greatest mistake in their lives." The Secretary of Labor added a word or two, which may assume great importance as General Motors continues to press its demand for eviction of the sit-down strikers: "The American people do not expect them [G.M.] to sulk in their tents because they feel the sit-down strike is illegal. There was a time when picketing was considered illegal, and before that, strikes of any kind were illegal. The legality of the sit-down strikes has yet to be determined."

From Detroit came another official statement which has had the effect of further strengthening the auto union's position. Governor Murphy greeted a group of "loyal [to the boot that kicks them] G.M. employees" with the accusation that "there are agents provocateurs at work on an adroit plan to embarrass me and compel the use of force." To the delegation he said: "You ought to be ashamed you are being used in this way. . . . There are plans afoot in Flint for sham mobs to be turned loose on the streets, merely to involve the militia actively. . . . General Motors officials tell me they are not responsible. . . . I am going to find out."

The net effect of John L. Lewis's call for presidential support for collective bargaining has been, therefore, to discredit General Motors and its hypocritical pronunciamentos concerning collective bargaining before intelligent and progressive public opinion. As matters now stand, it is not the C.I.O. or the United Automobile Workers of America which is defying the government, but the General Motors Corp. Most important of all, the auto workers themselves, as well as workers in dozens of other industries, whose conditions forecast strike struggles in the immediate future, have been assured by Lewis's statement that the C.I.O. intends to smoke out the bull-headed corporations and industrialists and bring their reactionary and anti-labor stands clearly into the open. The working people of the country have been reminded in emphatic terms that the man they elected President won their votes because he promised that their rights as productive workers would be defended. And President Roosevelt's memory has been refreshed.

This may be a difficult course for the President, a confirmed fence-sitter, to follow. It must be remembered that, although he rebuked Alfred P. Sloan, he rebuked John L. Lewis too. Thus far his words (and there have been words *only*) have merely expressed a negative position in the entire automobile conflict. No open statement in support of the rights of the striking auto workers has been forthcoming—a statement which is in order now as a logical extension, in specific terms, of his preëlection position. From the fence which Roosevelt straddles, his smile and his frown flash forth in both directions, but his position and his actions still are highly uncertain. Powerful pressure groups on the right have access to the presidential ear more readily than have the workers. As in other struggles of the past in which Roosevelt has played a part, his real action will be determined by the volume and power of the pressure applied. It is in the capital that strikes have been neatly broken in the past. A careful check must be kept and powerful pressure trained on Roosevelt, Perkins, et al., to prevent betrayal.

Pressure Is Needed

SENATOR LAFOLLETTE'S subcommittee investigating industrial espionage and violations of workers' civil rights is beginning to touch some very tender spots. Since resuming its hearings in the fall, the subcommittee has revealed appalling pictures of terrorism, violence, and coercion beneath the smiling surface of industrial-labor relations—pictures that a thousand times over justify workers in their mild recourse of sitting down in their "masters' " property. The subcommittee has afforded the American public just a glimpse of the feudal control exercised over a large territory of Alabama by the Tennessee Coal, Iron, & Railroad Co., which has the complete subserviency of local officials. It has exposed the National Metal Trades Association and the Corporations Auxiliary Co. as "protective" organizations whose sole purpose is to protect the open-shop policy of their clients and to supply them with convicted criminals for strike-breaking. And it revealed only last week that the two best customers of the Corporations Auxiliary Co. are Chrysler Motors and General Motors. It proposes to see just how Mr. Sloan and his colleagues use these criminals.

But the LaFollette subcommittee cannot function without money. Its meager budget is already exhausted. There are many senators who have no wish to see it continue, much less broaden its activities. Even now a rider has been attached to the deficiency appropriation bill to prevent the subcommittee's use of assistants borrowed from W.P.A. or from executive departments. And there will certainly be a hard fight to secure anything like an adequate appropriation for the subcommittee's continuance. At least $100,000 is needed, and, if borrowed help is banned, a great deal more. Pressure must be brought to bear on the Senate for this purpose. Letters are effective, telegrams more so. Let your senator know how you stand.

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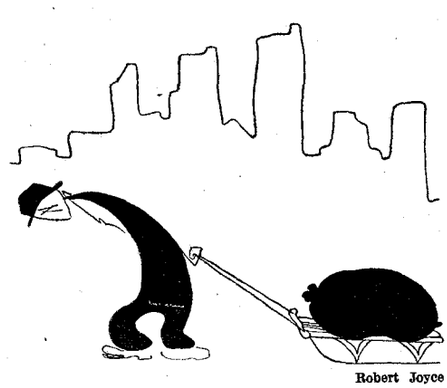
REVIEW AND COMMENT

A biography of Tom Paine—Mike Gold, collected—William Saroyan and a W.P.A. almanac

"CREEDS die; humanity endures; and human beings are much more interesting than their causes or their beliefs." Such a judgment as this, with which Mr. Pearson prefaces his biography,* seems strangely inappropriate applied to a man like Tom Paine. How fiercely Paine himself would have jeered it down, and how thoroughly Mr. Pearson's own book refutes its motto! If Paine's personality is more interesting today than his genius as a popularizer of revolutionary ideas, why does this book bristle with page-long quotations from his works; quotations which prove to be (and which, we may be fairly sure, Mr. Pearson *knows* to be) as fresh as though they had been coined yesterday; while the more intimate data tend to retreat into special paragraphs and chapters labeled Personal? No, Paine's beliefs, together with his actions in the two major upheavals of the eighteenth century, the American and the French, are clearly more 'interesting" (it's Mr. Pearson's word) than his peculiarly volatile personality. And so it has been ever since Paine's writings, ignored or detested by the class which they helped to fix in power, passed underground, to be "thumbed to pieces in public libraries" (as Carl Van Doren once said) by worthy petty-bourgeois radicals—atheists and Anarchists—who like Paine himself recognized that for their class, the bourgeois revolution had fallen short of its promises. And so it is above all today, when ferments start once more in the deep vats of society, and people look to revolutionists of the past for analogies to their own struggles; anticipations and justifications of their own beliefs and actions.

Mr. Pearson's book was not written, however, as was the brilliant Mr. J. C. Miller's recent *Sam Adams,* to discredit, either deliberately or otherwise, its hero and with him revolutionary agitation and revolution itself. Mr. Pearson is perhaps a bit disillusioned with such activities, and at one point he enters, rather abruptly but also hesitatingly, on a lament over the grim dictatorships which are, he feels, a consequence of all revolutions. Also, he is somewhat divided in his mind as to how to estimate Paine. Sometimes he drops into the language of psychology as though he wanted to make a case-study of an abnormal type. But he seems to realize that with such a treatment, the readers whom he meant to convince would only exclaim, "Well, if Paine wasn't merely a cheap-jack agitator, then he was a nut!"; and so he softens, and finally he drops altogether the psychiatrist's approach. On the whole, Mr. Pearson is aware of Paine's greatness and also, as his choice of timely quotations from the writings shows, he is sensitive to the need for justice in the world of his readers. He is anxious, meanwhile, to do justice to Paine himself, to make him understandable, a human being. To whom? If to the average reader, then we may doubt whether he will have succeeded. If Paine, with his rigorous personal idealism and restless lust for reform, is attractive at all to the cynical average reader, won't it be as a compensation for just that cynicism, as an ideal type akin to the selfless Quixotes and Myshkins of literature, or the Shelleys of romantic biography? Perhaps it is only in the light of revolutionary values that the rare logic of Paine's thinking and Paine's behavior are truly intelligible.

Weak as it is in background and in historical sense, Mr. Pearson's biography, nevertheless, offers a clue to Paine's character and career. The remarkable thing about him was, as has been said, his self-denying moral idealism—and in action, his ever unsatisfied passion for drastic social transformations, for the complete fulfillment of the revolutionary ideas of the middle class. In this thoroughness, as in the fact that he adapted to immediate needs and popularized into great slogans the concepts of earlier theorists, his role in his time was not unlike Lenin's in our time. He did much less original thinking than Lenin did, however, and by opposing the Reign of Terror, which was necessary, as we now know, to bourgeois consolidation, he made a serious blunder. In many ways, however, he spanned his own epoch and urged reforms which were only to be achieved, if ever under capitalism, in the course of time and under the pressure of his own class (the petty-bourgeoisie) and that of the proletariat. No sooner had he arrived in America than he began agitating for Negro freedom. Of women, for whose liberation he also fought, he said, "Over three quarters of the globe Nature has placed them between contempt and misery." Closer, as a petty-bourgeois, to the developing proletariat, and more aware of its needs and its potentialities than were the big bourgeois, he again and again denounced "the crime of poverty in states calling themselves civilized" (Pearson's words). War he repeatedly condemned, recognizing, though imperfectly, its economic origins. "War is the common harvest of all those who participate in the division and expenditure of public money, in all countries." And "Man is not the enemy of Man, but through the medium of a false system of Government." For "false system of Government" we read today "false system of economy," but in Paine's time, causes were veiled in political terms, as at an earlier time in religious terms; and where we today would point to material conditions as justification for political transformations, Paine and all his generation used the abstract word Nature. As idealist revolutionism in its extreme form leads logically to anarchism, so Paine, though not in practice an Anarchist, could say, "The instant formal Government is abolished, society begins to act: a general association takes place, and common interest produces common security." If the real causes of things were sometimes veiled from him, Paine saw correctly the connection between crime and poverty. "Why is it that scarcely any are executed but the poor?" he asks. "The fact is proof, among other things, of a wretchedness in their condition." So he proposed that governments economize on wars and spend their savings on old-age pensions. And "When the rich plunder the poor of his rights, it becomes an example to the poor to plunder the rich of his property."



Robert Joyce

To be sure, most of Paine's concepts may be found buried in Rousseau and Montesquieu or the seventeenth-century Utopians. His role was to remove these ideas from their learned contexts and make them accessible in the form of epigrammatic slogans which, for fire and crackling wit, have never been surpassed. His role, further, was to continue to urge these slogans long after the big bourgeoisie had done with them. And in this way, he became an embarrassment, not only to the reactionaries, but even to his friends. In his case, as in Jefferson's, it was undoubtedly his connection with the petty bourgeoisie, the class whose ambitions were to be disappointed in the struggles of the time, that inspired him to continue where the big bourgeoisie had left off, detesting as he did the parasitism of finance as much as he detested the parasitism of the clergy and the baronage. And so in action, committed whole-heartedly though he was to revolution in general, he did not commit himself, except on temporary issues, to any particular group or program; for the reason that any entrenched group, any immediately workable program, must at that time have been the expression of that financial faction of the middle class which he distrusted. We cannot say that he *divined* the fate of his own class in advance; we can only say that he acted like a man very sensitive to the realities.

Some of this reluctance to commit himself seems to have entered even into his intimate psychological processes and may well explain his stubborn conduct in human relationships: his refusal to sleep with a wife he did not love, to take revenge on his enemies when he

* TOM PAINE: FRIEND OF MANKIND, *by Hesketh Pearson. Harper's.* $3.

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might safely and "legitimately" have done so, to accept money for his writings when he might have made his fortune; his insistence that help must come to him, if at all, in the shape of a government pension, when he might have lived comfortably on the private bounty of Washington and others. All these seemingly extravagant scruples and perverse denials would seem to have been inspired by an impulse to enter upon no contracts which might entail his freedom or his conscience.

Thus, his being rooted in the petty bourgeoisie may account for the fact that he emerged from those struggles practically unspotted, while the post-revolutionary careers of most of the insurgents were far less enviable. We may account in this way for his singular flexibility, his freedom from the commitments that might have dampered his continuing enthusiasm for reform; but we do not, by this logic, depreciate him in the least. His greatness lay in the fact that he recognized his peculiar opportunity for what it was, seized it, and extracted its value to the drop.

A better motto for Paine than the one which Mr. Pearson has invented would be Paine's own motto for one of his writings: "Who the author of this publication is, is wholly unnecessary to the public, as the object for attention is the *doctrine itself,* not the *man.*" (The emphasis is Paine's.)

F. W. DUPEE.

Gold Against the (Bourgeois) World

CHANGE THE WORLD!, *by Michael Gold. International Publishers.* $1.39.

IN re-reading Granville Hicks's scholarly and stirring *John Reed,* I was struck, in the bibliography, by the great number of poems, stories, and articles by Reed that were never put between covers. A lot of it was chaff, no doubt, but what a lot of good stuff must have been lost! And yet, it was this great mass of writing which, in the main, made him so well known, and was the foundation for the classic *Ten Days.*

I was reminded of this in reading Michael Gold's *Change the World!* Not that I want to make comparisons, of course.

I recall, also, a publisher's bright idea of about six years ago, that Mike Gold's scattered notes and full-blown pieces on writers and writing would make a swell book. Though it never materialized at that time, it would have been a much needed bombshell from the Left. This was even before Mike gave both barrels to Thornton Wilder. But there was much more before that: short workouts and full-length bouts with Steffens, Eliot, Floyd Dell, Hemingway, and others. In his notes in this very magazine before it graduated to a weekly, he shot Ezra Pound so full of critical buckshot, that the poor devil must have been months getting it out of his system, if one were to judge by the stream of dizzy letters that came out of Italy.

All these critically violent, often brilliant pot-shots at the literary scene brought stacks of replies. I am not concerned particularly

Strikebreakers Abe Blashka

about those tender bourgeois on whose corns Mike stepped so rudely. (Remember the lady who protested in the *New Republic,* when Mike jumped Wilder, that he was "spitting on lilies"?) The big response came from middle- and working-class readers. And a great deal from writers, full-blown and potential. Not that they always agreed. (Neither did we.) If they had, I'm sure Mike would have quit writing and gone back to his old job with the express company. The point is, these literary salvos were always provocative, stimulating, and, in the main, right as all hell.

Change the World! covers a wider range. These are pieces turned out in a daily grind, in sweat and honest proletarian passion. They give you a remarkably rounded picture of the writer. We can talk about his craftsmanship, critical keenness, revolutionary understanding, culture, personal slants, or what have you. He's got all that, plenty. But after reading this book, I am left with one indelible impression. It is that the author is saturated in a burning love for his own working class. This came as no surprise to me. I have seen so many letters to Mike from workers all over the country. He has written much about his own New York East Side life, and the East Side (mostly needle trades) workers love him. But I have also had a slanty-eyed Mongolian steel worker in Siberia tell me about Mike's *Jews Without Money.* It is this thorough saturation in working-class feeling that one finds in *Change the World!* Small wonder that this material picked up such an enthusiastic following when it appeared in the *Daily Worker.* The point is, Mike hates the bourgeoisie, its oppression and hokum. Hates it passionately. This makes him swing wild at times, as the best men do in a fight. But it puts into his writing so much sheer moving power, it will make anyone who writes simply weep in his beer in envy.

Edwin Seaver, in a warm review in the *Daily Worker,* writes that "Not ideas but human interest are Mike's forte." To me it is precisely ideas, vivid, truthful, convincing ideas, born of a proletarian life, enriched by talent and a close contact with the revolutionary vanguard that characterize Mike's writing. I could boil it down to this: this book is the job of a class-conscious, able, proletarian literary worker.

To those interested in literature, there's plenty of interest in this book in frequent reference to Gertrude Stein, "forbidding priestess of a strange literary cult"; Walter Lippmann, who embarked on a "remarkable career of opportunism"; Dreiser, Jack London, T. S. Eliot, Malraux, Babel, Nexo, and many more.

One of the beauties of Mike's writing is that while weighing the values of the world's finest literature, unlike a snooty bourgeois critic, he can find time to talk with a worker about his first novel, or with a poet stuck in the Missouri gumbo, "who spends half his time shoveling manure and the better half writing bitter poems against the American kulaks and bankers who exploit him."

For twenty years Michael Gold has publicly and privately written this encouragement to young writers, particularly workers. That ought to be said, I think. I know it has meant a lot. This thorough proletarian saturation of Mike Gold's is seen in the choice of his subjects, not only the broader horrors of capitalism, war, fascism, etc. There are stirring pieces on a seventy-year-old housepainter; on a German revolutionary, "My Friend Is Dead"; on taxi-drivers, bartenders, and babies.

In "Sorrows of a Scab," he writes about a girl who found she was likely to lose all her friends, including the male ones:

> Pearl is afraid she will never grab herself a Bronx boy and push a baby carriage with the millions of other proud Bronx mammas who create those baby-carriage traffic jams every morning on the Grand Concourse. Ah, the tragedy of being a scab! It makes one sad enough to go out and drink a dozen beers in sympathy, or change a baby's diapers.
>
> Pearl's tragedy must have busted the big fascist

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heart of Supreme Court Justice Cotillo. Immediately, with tears running down his face, he walloped the union with an injunction against picketing.

His pictures of working-class misery are made vivid in a phrase. A dismal dump on the East Side of New York, where unemployed workers slept, "smelled, like others, of urine and melancholy."

One could go on like this for pages. But I want to be honest. Not all of this book is brilliant writing. As far as I'm concerned, a few pieces fall flat. In even some of the good pieces, I sometimes resent the load of well-meant preaching. It has an occasional echo of my parochial-school days, when the parish priest dished out soggy advice. I didn't fall for some of the fantasy, either. Some of it seemed strained to me. You'll find other weak or not-to-your-taste spots in these sixty-five pieces on a world of things. That's natural. But what a wealth of good stuff you'll find, and so well told. WALT CARMON.

Portrait of a Predicament

3 TIMES *3, by William Saroyan. Conference Press.* $2.50.

IN a story by Gogol, a certain lunatic contends he received a letter from a dog. Read this manuscript, he insists, notice the style: of course it was written by a dog—no human being writes this way.

Saroyan would be quite pleased to believe that he does not write like a human being. From the breezy, lisping publishers' blurb, which should warn the reader from the start, through the intimate, infantilistic introduction, the cuddling prefaces, insolent you-know-me explanatory notes, Zarathustra exhortations, Hollywood-epic fables, lyrical garglings, life's-early-ache reminiscences, literary inside-stuff, political and philosophical tapeworms—all the mushy, submarine substances shoveled together to make this book are presented as evidence that Saroyan, while he is more human and "alive" than anybody else, is not, when it comes to writing, a mere human being. Or, if he is a human being, then all other human beings are not human beings—anyway, the point is, there's a big difference.

Only, unlike Gogol's lunatic, Saroyan assumes that not to be human means to be a genius or a god or something above humanity.

Actually, of course, neither Gogol's fantasy nor Saroyan's can critically explain Saroyan's mongrel writing. If space permitted, it might be worth while to analyze Saroyan as a sociological phenomenon and a psychological case-study—the literary problems involved are negligible. What is of intellectual interest in the documents he has produced are the traces of the oppressed peasant people from which he springs, and of the misery of immigrant life in the United States. That a fair success in competing in the American literary market should have had, in spite of his spontaneous hatred for middle-class manners, such a sinister effect upon a naïve and critically unformed spirit is also of symptomatic importance. There is, too, the problem of the separation that tends to establish itself between the national minorities in America and their cultural offspring, and the degree of this separation as compared with that of the native classes from their cultural representatives. Finally, in its antipathy to science, organization, and conscious analysis, its illusionistic individualism, its nostalgic religiousness of the "natural" and the "cosmic," and its sense of being unique and alone in the world, the ideology of Saroyan mingles with that general mysticism of modern times, which reflects the competitive ingression of the countryside mind into urban conditions of life, the local peculiarities of which play so large a part in our culture.

These problems are general ones, and are implicated in Saroyan's jargon only in the sense that a speck floating on a current reveals in its passivity the forces that shift it about. Saroyan's literary insignificance is associated with the fact that he casts no light even upon his own situation, which is the only thing that interests him.

In his present frame of mind, it is impossible for him to learn anything about himself—since he conceives his position, as an individual, to be opposed to that of mankind.

> "I honestly believe there is hope for man, for one man at a time, and I honestly believe that, with all the encumbrances of the world, all the viciousness, all the deceit and cruelty, man's only hope for salvation is himself: he is his salvation. God is. . . . I admire the Communists for being able to be stupid enough to believe there is hope for collective man. . . . The masses aren't ready, I'm afraid, for the shock of genuine knowing, and not spiritually equipped to face the inward tragedy which occurs with genuine knowing. I don't think the Communists are either."

You see, there's no hope for human society but only for one man at a time. But what is this hope for the one man, a hope which exists in the present society or in any other, regardless of time and place?

To become great! Our superhuman friend is concerned exclusively with this matter of greatness. But the kind of greatness which he feels to be most accessible to him is literary greatness. This becomes the true theme of his work. Great Writing, "good writing but not necessarily great," Great Writing but not always great, bad writing with Great Writing in it, a short story which is not a good short story but which contains some Great Writing and some good writing—Saroyan is a regular rabbi of such literary hierarchism.

Georges Schreiber

This bohemian neurosis of literary greatness is logically consistent with a timeless peasant rumination and a belief in the existence of a Wisdom of the Ages which can be discovered and repeated. Great Writing; Great Content. When the concrete suffering of human history is thrown out, "tragic knowing" comes in to fill the empty spaces. Saroyan will fulfill himself in his own eyes when he has learned how to project some of the dumb giants, which occupy so much space in modern sentimental writing. The emptier the conception, the less it is infected with time. The fact that everything he is trying to do has been done already by the literature of fifteen years ago, is a time-irony that does not disconcert Saroyan. He has absolutely no terror of clichés. The magic of Great Writing will take care of them.

Thus it is a peasant simplism which tends to complete the bourgeois-bohemian literary megalomania. Nothing, for instance, could be more farcical than the spectacle of this dank, dingy, half-rate, dwarfish ideology of literary competition pounding itself on the chest and imagining that its artificially stimulated "cosmic" heartiness and metaphysical *sans gêne* has made it the equal of its peasant grandfather in "realness" and "tragic knowing." . . . Nothing could be funnier, nor more pathetic.

In fact, the only ingratiating quality in Saroyan's work arises from the pathos of his intellectual predicament, the obviously puny assumption with which he is trying to break down the resistance of large problems. This pathos of scale, however, the reader does not feel obliged to take seriously, in his particular instance, because of the disagreeable and morbidly frivolous character of Saroyan himself. HAROLD ROSENBERG.

Wit and Information

ALMANAC FOR NEW YORKERS: 1937, *Compiled by Workers of the Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration in the City of New York. Simon & Schuster.* 50c.

DEDICATED to "New Yorkers who live here and to those who wouldn't take the town as a gift," this calendar of events in Manhattan for the year 1937 should prove useful, and at the same time amusing, to the man-about-town and his lady. Besides collecting a large body of data as to concerts, meetings, lectures, conventions, etc., the industrious project workers have included drawings, verses, and odds-and-ends of curious historical fact.

If you wish to know what will be doing on March 3, for example, here it is:

> Public is invited to the regular monthly combination social and lecture given by the Women's League for Palestine at the Temple Emanu-El. . . . The Museum of Modern Art displays the International Exhibition of Photography. . . . This day in 1891 the Board of Aldermen by unanimous vote named the junction of Amsterdam Avenue, the Boulevard, and Seventieth Street for William T. Sherman.

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Livelier and less inhibited than the *New Yorker,* the booklet is often genuinely bright and funny. At random:

If the British owned Westchester,
It would undoubtedly become Whester;
Or if King George's was Manhattan,
They'd bloody well call it Mattan;
Now aren't we glad it would break their conks
To do anything like that to Bronx.

In addition to such flashes, there is also much information of a more solid nature, including a map of the city subways, an abstract of the state game and fish laws, a glossary of New Yorkese. FRED DAY.

Brief Reviews

GREAT BRITAIN AND PALESTINE, 1915-1936, INFORMATION DEPARTMENT PAPERS NO. 20, *The Royal Institute of International Affairs. Oxford University Press.* 85c.

Much of the material that any person, seriously interested in getting to the bottom of the Arab-Zionist-British antagonism in Palestine, would find indispensable is summarized in this useful handbook. While the book skillfully avoids any obvious show of bias, British imperialism, as one might expect from the source, gets all the better of the argument. Practically every phase of the subject is explored except the key phase: imperialist domination over one of the world's most vital and strategic areas. Because this is taken for granted, and because practically all the sources used are either British or Zionist, the Arabs get nothing resembling justice from the implicit argument in the book. Nevertheless, with concision and authority, a vast amount of raw material is set forth on the fundamental economic and social problems and antagonisms which have made the holy land a place of unholy conflict. T. D.

THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND THE SOVIET UNION IN THE FAR EAST, *by Victor A. Yakhontoff. The American Russian Institute for Cultural Relations with the Soviet Union.* 15c.

According to Palme Dutt, the Far East is potentially the hottest spot on the globe today. This brief, concentrated, unbiased pamphlet will help you to understand the situation there. It contains a survey of Russian relations with the Far East from the year 1221, when the Mongol invaders crossed the Volga, to the year 1936, when Japan and Germany concluded their pact "against communism." A chronological table and a lengthy bibliography are included. F. W. D.

LANCER AT LARGE, *by Francis Yeats-Brown. Viking Press.* $2.75.

Starting from the New Delhi, seat of English rule in India, Mr. Yeats-Brown of the Bengal Lancers, seeker for The Light, moves on to Meerut and Gorakhpur, attempting a picture of modern peasant life, but giving us mainly his own spontaneous impressions and a review of the past. From Gorakhpur, he travels on to Allahabad, and there at the River Ganges, he witnesses the greatest religious festival of the year. Twenty million people! Peasants, ascetics, fakirs, beggars, dwarfs, lepers! Faced by this vast press of humanity, he arrives, by rather dubious reasoning, at the conclusion that the caste system of old India is eugenics in practice.

According to one Englishwoman whom he meets, the present revolutionary beginnings in India are but an outlet for passion, a sexual compensation. The author himself wonders whether it might not be unemployment. Unfortunately, however, such flashes of realistic thinking are not too frequent with him. Perhaps the best passage in the book is that which describes Ram Lal, a tanner, an outcast, representative of fifty million poverty-stricken workers

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of India, diseased, illiterate, living in mud-huts in the smell of cow-dung, preyed on by unscrupulous grasping *banias* (money-lenders). It is a pity that Mr. Yeats-Brown did not see fit to portray India through the eyes of such a character as this. The concrete notations on Hindu life, which might have resulted from such an approach, would probably have been worth more than his own mystical visions of the country, sincere and even passionate as these are. J. S.

BARREN METAL, *by Naomi Jacob. Macmillan Co.* $2.50.

If this novel did not pretend to concern itself with problems which face Jews as a persecuted race, we could dismiss it as the romantic piece of fiction that it really is. Not that the author makes any serious effort to come to grips with the vital problems of the Jewish people. If she refers to them, it is because they seem unavoidable in a novel whose characters are Jewish, or because she feels that it helps to give her book importance. At any rate, the approach is thoroughly bourgeois, at times even snobbish, and altogether unexceptional.

The story has very little to do with the fact that Rachel, the heroine, is a Jewess. We are asked to grieve with her over the loss of her husband's companionship, when he is engrossed in making money, and to thrill over her love affair with a very cultured Englishman of leisure. There are the usual scenes of renunciation and fulfillment, replete with more than the usual number of endearments. The happy ending is accomplished by the novel expedient of letting the husband die. M. G. M.

THE HUMAN COMEDY, *by James Harvey Robinson, with an introduction by Harry Elmer Barnes. Harper's.* $3.

The late Professor Robinson certainly ranked with the better historians of his period; and this last book of his (a compilation) is good history—good in that it gives a lively, iconoclastic, extraordinarily well-written résumé of man's past, an eloquent and honest plea for historical-mindedness. We soon discover, however, that it is old-line liberalism, liberalism dying with its boots on; and all the misconceptions of Marxism, the vague idealisms, and tragic half-way conclusions are there. Worse, the analysis of imperialism and war is woefully mystical and misleading.

In the main, the book is a plea for more enlightenment, higher intelligence, better education. Very well. But such a faith blindly assumes that the existing social order will of itself usher in these missionary forces in order to convert itself; and such a faith eternally postpones and ever paralyzes action. H. S. J.

★

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The Final Struggle, being Countess Tolstoy's Diary for 1910. Oxford. $2.50.

The New Soviet Constitution, by Joseph Stalin. International. 2c.

Hitler Over Russia?, by Ernst Henri. Translated by Michael Davidson. Simon & Schuster. $2.50.

A Book of Contemporary Short Stories, by Dorothy Brewster, Ph.D., with an Appendix on Writing the Short Story, by Lillian Barnard Gilkes. Macmillan. $3.50.

History of Florence from the Founding of the City Through the Renaissance, by Ferdinand Schevill. Harcourt, Brace. $5.

Selected Writings, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. International. $2.25.

The Crisis in the Socialist Party, by William Z. Foster. Workers Library Publishers. 5c.

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

W.P.A. choral and orchestral concerts—Reactionary and nostalgic dance forms—Movies and plays

WHEN I wrote a couple of weeks ago about the aching need of a regular series of choral concerts, I didn't know the ambitious plans that were being formulated for the W.P.A. Madrigal Singers, the only subsidized choral repertory ensemble we have at present, and, as such, the only group gifted with the permanency and assurance of frequent rehearsals essential to the competent undertaking of such a series. The program outlines for five Sunday afternoon concerts at the Federal Music Project's Theatre of Music in New York have just come in, and they make heartening reading. If Lehman Engel's sixteen singers do even as well (and they should do a lot better) as they did in their Bach cantata performances last fall and early winter, there are going to be some great moments in these concerts. They have mighty music to grapple with, and no group of any musical sensibility at all can wrestle regularly with works of this caliber without being electrified (call it inspired if you will) into at least occasional fully worthy performances.

The first concert in this series (January 31) and the first in the new Mozart-Haydn series by the F.M.P. Chamber Orchestra (January 29) will have come off before this appears in print, but I don't need the press blurb on the heavy subscription sale for the orchestral concerts (exceeding that of the Bach series last fall) to prophesy that it will be the livelier drawing card. The conductors will include Arthur Fiedler, Horace Britt, Paul Stassevitch, Samuel Gardner, and Chalmers Clifton, and the alert Mr. Fiedler starts the series with a program that sets a high standard in interest and catholicity for the rest, sufficiently enticing to lure me (with regrets to be sure) from the New School Chorus's performance of the Mozart *Requiem Mass* and two choruses from Gluck's *Orfeo* scheduled for the same evening.

The "popular symphonic programs" on Sunday evenings will be popular, all right, but I doubt that they will be at all comparable in musical significance. Certainly not, if one judges from the initial concert that inaugurated the new Theatre of Music with mild fanfare on January 24, with the director of the Federal Music Project, Dr. Nikolai Sokoloff, conducting a very ordinary program featuring the Sibelius first symphony as the main dish. Due to its tie-up with the theater opening, this was one of the few F.M.P. concerts to receive any coverage in the daily press—where it was dealt with almost too gently. It was nothing to write home about. The Federal Symphony's playing was coherent and under good control, but there was a lamentable lack of attention to tonal essentials; not only a lack of individuality and variety to the tonal qualities of the first desk men and the various orchestral choirs, but the old and too familiar bugaboo—the lack of homogeneity, the blend and balance and contrast of tone that distinguishes a first-rate performance by one of the rare geniuses of the baton from a routine reading of notes. There was also a marked lack of sonority and sparkle, but this was probably due more to the acoustical deadness of the heavily draped stage than to the orchestra itself.

I can't get excited about the noble task of feeding the peepul popular symphonic works at cafeteria prices, unless the programs are more appetizing and substantial than those of the multitudinous broadcast concerts of a similar nature, and unless the corporeal performances equal or surpass the quality standards of those on the air or disks. However, the Federal Symphony has genuine potentialities, and its second concert (January 31), under Paul Stassevitch, including the Roger Sessions *Black Maskers* music, Kodaly's *Galanta* dances, Dvorak's second symphony, and the K.P.E. Bach concerto in D arranged by Steinberg, showed that one needn't despair of intelligent and catholic program-making.

There will also be a series of so-called grand opera in English (beginning February 18 with the *Tales of Hoffman*) and chamber opera (beginning February 15 with Hart's *Romance of a Robot* and Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona*), while the Composers' Forum-Laboratory continues its indefatigable work of first (and, in many cases, last) performances. But in all this flurry of W.P.A. activity—promising to keep the Theatre of Music in New York open every evening and several afternoons in the week—the choral series remains the outstanding attraction for sheer artistic significance. I hate to catalogue, but the only way to stress its importance is to give an outline of ground it will cover.

A. Walkowitz

The first concert (early Italian music) leads off with the *Missa Brevis* of Palestrina, three madrigals by that fantastic prince of musicians and prince of murderers Carlo Gesulado—as debonairly daring with chromatics and false relations as he was with a stiletto—plus madrigals and motets by Monteverdi, Vecchi, Gabrieli, Anerio, and Nanini—giants, every man of them. February 14: French and Netherland composers, including Jannequin, Goudimel, Josquin des Prés, Sweelinck, Obrecht, and other titans. February 26: Dunstable, Whythorne, and a miscellany of familiar and unfamiliar Elizabethans. March 14: Germans from Schütz and Bach (Motet *Jesu meine Freude*) to Haydn, Beethoven, and Hindemith. April 11: an entire concert devoted to Orlandus de Lassus, madrigals, chansons, and the Mass *In die Tribulationis*.

If you are looking for pretty-pretty antique charm or an amusing glance through music's family album of the bewhiskered grandpappies of the standard composers we know as "great" today, you might just as well stay at home. The dust of centuries has settled only on the printed or manuscript scores, not on the matchless tonal tapestries themselves. If you go (and here is a chance to hear more works of loftier stature than you can ordinarily hear in several years of conventional concerts), forget all about the impressive dates and go for the music. And if your ears and mind haven't been damrosched out of all capacity for genuine musical experience, you will find more real guts and feeling in these works for a few unaccompanied human voices than in 99 percent of the accepted nineteenth and twentieth century "masterpieces" enlisting the sweating services of a hundred or more instrumentalists, singers, and dancers. R. D. DARRELL.

THE DANCE

EVERYBODY dancing in the modern idiom isn't dancing for the masses; everybody dancing isn't anti-war or anti-fascist. Yeichi Nimura, for example, the Japanese dancer, who has been around the American concert stage for years, using occidental music for his oriental and quasi-oriental themes, and his partner, Lisan Kay, are pretty much removed from anything but a thoroughly petty-bourgeois audience. Their principal concern is with the *Javanese* (*Monkey God*), the *Sword Ritual*, "the eve of battle" and the soldier who "gathers his swords . . . and fervently mimes the glory of combat." *Spear Episode* is their concern and *The Earth Is a Drum*—picturesque reminders of the goodness inspiring the military. Arms and conquest are matters for the elegant costume and the magnifi-

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cent gesture. The beating of the drums is for their justification and not for satire or condemnation.

And completely in line with his ideological approach is the dancer's *Figures of Earth*. "In the earth-struggle, Man, and his counterpart, have failed. For they love only to hate, create only to destroy, etc." This is the accompanying program note, and whatever its justification so far as the dance is concerned, the choreography is in essence the story of "Tom Jones," "Civic Virtue," the male triumphant, or, for all purposes, the place of the woman (man's counterpart) is in the kitchen.

Nimura is not an important figure in the dance field; his influence, if he has any at all, is not too significant. This, of course, might be expected, considering the nature of his work. But the Japanese dancer has a good sense of movement, of theater; he can build up an audience, and undoubtedly he will —but not among the people who move with what Plekhanov called the "great emancipatory ideas of our times."

Dvora Lapson (Hassidic dance-mime, she labels herself) is given to bourgeois apologetics: to nostalgia, religious ritual, and back-to-Palestine nationalism, all completely in the best Zionist tradition. The jim-crow Ghetto becomes the sentimental place of quaint custom, the *Shadchente* (Marriage Broker), and the dreamy-eyed boy under the green trees. The synagogue is hallowed. *Eretz Yisrael* (Land of Israel) is symbolized in the "exhilaration of work on the soil" (what there is of it) and the joyous "spirit of the new peasantry."

There is a body of contemporary Yiddish dancing that has a proletarian sympathy, notably the work of Benjamin Zemach (in *200,000,* the Artef production), Lillian Shapero, Lilly Mehlman, and Miriam Blecher. Work built on traditional Yiddish themes, even in the most ecstatic of Hassidic celebrations, it is sensitive to the basic conflicts and sufferings of the people.

Dvora Lapson is young to the concert field, and the definite inadequacies of her technique and composition perhaps may be overlooked. Her approach to composition, however, grows out of fundamental contradictions. It cannot be expected that an artist, any more than an art, will flourish from a base that must be and is in a state of disintegration.

OWEN BURKE.

THE SCREEN

IT IS not putting it too strongly when I say that *Spain in Flames* (Cameo, N. Y.) is composed of raw documentary material (the shots themselves, apart from the editing) that is the most amazing, the most poignant and terrifying I've ever seen. Material that is so moving is rare in film documentation and impossible to recreate in synthetic form. This feature is, in reality, two short films. The first, *The Fight for Freedom* (the first production of the newly-formed Film Historians, Inc.), is a three-reeler giving the background of the Spanish civil war. From an historical

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and economic introduction, the film moves on to the invasion of Spain by Nazi and Italian Fascist propaganda, then to the revolt of the generals and officers, and finally to the actual civil war. It contains, among other material, some of the film issued by the Spanish government. (But it is a mistake to say that all of *The Fight for Freedom* was "photographed by official Spanish government cameramen.") The second part, *No Pasaran* (They Shall Not Pass) is a four-reel document entirely photographed at the front by Soviet cameramen. Here you see the Nazi warships in Alicante harbor; the delivery of foodstuffs and supplies by a Soviet steamer to the people of Spain; the siege of the Alcazar; the bombing of Madrid and the evacuation of the children; and finally, two stirring speeches by La Passionaria and Diaz. Some of the shots of the bombing of Madrid have already been shown in this country. But you haven't seen anything if you miss this film.

A picture of another revolt of another day is presented in the John Ford-Dudley Nichols version of Sean O'Casey's drama of the Easter Week 1916 rebellion in Dublin, *The Plough and the Stars* (RKO-Radio). It is only natural that we should look forward to this film on the basis of last year's *The Informer*. While it overshadows anything that has come from Hollywood this year in artistic and social importance, it is nevertheless disappointing. For those who have seen or read the play, and those who know Irish history, this film will seem inadequate. In all fairness, it must be pointed out that John Ford has endeavored to create a film that is dramatic and socially stimulating. He has also photographed it in a manner that tries to convey the feeling of those dark and terrible days of 1916. And while he has succeeded, in his sequences of street fighting, of the capture of the General Post Office by Jim Connolly and his Citizen's Army, of the scene in Bessie's living room, and of the execution of Connolly, Ford's attempts have in the main been curbed by the producers, some bad casting (especially in the case of Barbara Stanwyck), and his own inability to break away from Hollywood conventions. It is encouraging that both Nichols's story and Ford's direction went *beyond* the play. They give us an indication of Jack Clitheroe's hatred for the ruling class in the scene in which Jack and his wife walk through the park. They portray Connolly's execution (in an armchair) by the English firing squad. But in going beyond the limitations of the play's literary form, they ventured into political territory. The film gives us the first part of John Pearse's reading of the proclamation: "Irishmen and Irishwomen. In the name of God and of the dead generations . . . Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom. . . ." The program of the uprising is left there. If the rest of the proclamation had been filmed, it would have given meaning to Jack's last words that "some day Ireland will be free." Instead, it is half O'Casey, half a political document. But we can be grateful to Nichols and to Ford for

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their attempt. And we should be grateful for the Abbey Theater players in the cast, especially Barry Fitzgerald, who plays Fluther. Erin O'Brien-Moore (formally of the Provincetown players), who plays Rosie, would have done better in Barbara Stanwyck's role.

Masquerade in Vienna (55th Street Playhouse, N. Y.) is a delightful melodrama of pre-war Vienna. It is the original Austrian film from which M.G.M.'s *Escapade* was copied. Although the Hollywood film was reproduced almost frame for frame, this original is many times more fresh and entertaining.

PETER ELLIS.

THE THEATER

THE brimstone whiff of authentic fascist propaganda is drifting across the footlights at the Lyceum in New York these days, where Richard Aldrich and Richardson Myers have installed *Tide Rising,* by George Brewer, Jr., with Grant Mitchell as the star. We say "fascist propaganda" with no loose lip; we mean exactly that. It is a propaganda play primarily, and it makes use of the fascist formula for demagoguery by seeming to strike out equally at capitalists and Marxist-led workers, and by making "the public" and "public order" the criterion superior to the interests of either group. The fascist trick of building up a weight of sympathy for the workers and their cause, and then portraying radical leadership as the influence that threatens them and the "public" alike, is skillfully used —so skillfully, indeed, that the radical spectator develops a warm feeling for the play for at least half its length, after which the reversal of emphasis is so sharp that this reviewer, for one, felt that, with his guard down, he had been kicked in an unprotected part of his anatomy. Which is also by way of being an old fascist trick. The most dangerous thing about the play is its effectiveness, a trait which is helped as much by Grant Mitchell's appealing and persuasive performance as by the author's fairly authentic picture of the economic and political position of a petty-bourgeois businessman in the midst of a depression.

The play tells the story of Jim Cogswell, small-town druggist and good neighbor, who refuses to kotow to the mill-owner and to the labor leader (the old-line collaborationist type—also local political boss). His son, who went to New York and married a Communist, comes home, unemployed, with his wife, also unemployed (she wears flat-heeled shoes and a leather jacket), to get the old folks' help in getting a job. Papa Jim swallows his independence and asks the mill-owner to place her. She (Tamara) at once goes to work organizing the mill workers for strike, against the opposition of the old-line labor leader. She succeeds, and the mill-owner imports strikebreakers. With the class war about to break into the open, Papa Jim, the local judge, and the chief of the local police (no less!) have a conference on how both the mill owner and the strikers can be put in their place. Their recipe is to close the mill, bundle the strikebreakers out of town, and halt the

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strike. (Which, of course, leaves the workers just where they started, despite some earlier huffing and puffing about the low wages the mill pays.) But meanwhile the deputy sheriffs (sworn in by the bad bad sheriff despite the opposition of the good good police chief) precipitate violence at the picket line, in the course of which Jim's son, husband of the militant strike leader, is killed. (Plus another picket, who is killed by the strikers—one of those things.) Jim has no social program for solving the problem of class conflict, and says so, but not very loudly. What the play is very loud about is that militancy in workers doesn't get them anywhere, and is dangerous not only to everyone else in the community, but disastrous to themselves. Obviously, this play merits a boycott of sufficient effectiveness to discourage any movie-maker from touching it.

On the harmless side of life is *Naughty-Naught 'oo,* "a musical drama of life at Yale" at the turn of the century. It is a spoof revival in the Tears and Smiles hokum tradition, à la Christopher Morley's *After Dark* doings years ago in Hoboken. There is some fun in these elaborate antics at the American Music Hall in New York, fun which is not lessened by the fact that instead of sitting in regular seats, you sit at a table where you can order a drink as the proceedings proceed. There are tumblers and singing waitresses and such between the acts, and there's a bar and dance floor downstairs (no cover charge) where, after the show, a small band plays pleasingly. All around, not a bad set-up for some simple-minded relaxation.

ALEXANDER TAYLOR.

★

Forthcoming Broadcasts

(Times given are Eastern Standard, but all programs listed are on coast-to-coast hookups)

Education: "How New College Trains Teachers of Tomorrow," by three staff members of New College, Columbia University. Mon., Feb. 8, 2 p.m., N.B.C. red.

Farm Tenancy and Sharecropping: Norman Thomas on "What Next for the Sharecropper?," 10:30 p.m., Wed., Feb. 10, Columbia, and U. S. Dept. of Agriculture on "Are Farmers to Become Tenants or Owners?," Thurs., Feb. 11, 12:30 p.m., N.B.C. blue.

People's Lobby: "The American Standard of Living," a symposium including Senator Ernest Lundeen, Dr. Isidor Lubin, and others. Sat., Feb. 13, 1:30 p.m., N.B.C. blue.

Recent Recommendations

MOVIES

Black Legion. Warner Brothers' somewhat superficial document.

Great Guy. Civic crusading, with James Cagney the attraction.

Camille. The old yarn, worth seeing only because it has Garbo.

PLAYS

Dr. Faustus (Elliott. N. Y.). The W.P.A. theater's lively revival of Christopher Marlowe's classic.

But for the Grace of God (Guild, N. Y.). A proletarian play, with kids, written by Leopold Atlas and produced by the Theatre Guild.

You Can't Take It With You (Booth, N. Y.). A funny play by Hart and Kaufman about a goofy family.

The Women (Barrymore, N. Y.). More fun, by Clare Boothe, sharply satirizing the way bourgeois females juggle husbands.

MALCOLM COWLEY

Editor of The New Republic and author of *Exile's Return,* Chairman.

ANNA LOUISE STRONG

Author of *I Change Worlds,* just arrived from the Soviet Union and from Spain will discuss the People's Front in Spain.

William Sanderson

ROBERT MINOR

Member of the Central Committee, Communist Party, U.S.A., who covered the Madrid front for the *Daily Worker,* will speak on American Neutrality and Spain.

RALPH BATES

English writer, author of *Lean Men, The Olive Field,* recently arrived from active service in Spain will present a participant's account of the Civil War in Spain.

Wednesday, 8:30 P. M.
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BY MICHAEL GOLD

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